# Environment, Planning and Transport Committee

# Consultation Report

# Policy Review of Public Transport

We would like to thank the following organisations for contributing photographs to our report:

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# Foreword

[Photo of Richard Edwards AM]

[Text]

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**Chair, Environment, Planning and Transport Committee**

**July 2001**

# Members of the Environment, Planning and Transport Committee

[Photos of all committee members]

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# Chapter 1 Introduction

**Our focus**

1.1. Our policy review of public transport has concentrated on **bus, rail and community transport**, but we 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.

1.2. The original terms of reference for our review were to look at the National Assembly's public transport policies (covering bus, rail and community transport services) with a view to identifying:

- short-term changes within the existing statutory, regulatory and organisational framework which would facilitate the delivery and take-up of improved and integrated services;
- longer-term changes to the statutory, regulatory and organisational framework relating to public transport which would facilitate the delivery of improved services.

**Our approach**

1.3. Our review got underway in summer 2000 with an informal transport seminar, followed by a consultation exercise seeking from the views of a wide range of organisations in Wales and the United Kingdom (UK). Written submissions were received from the organisations listed at **Annex 1**, with many representatives attending committee meetings to discuss their views with us.

1.4. Committee rapporteurs visited Amsterdam, Edinburgh, Frankfurt and Sheffield to learn about best practice in integrated public transport. Further details of our visits can be found on the National Assembly website www.wales.gov.uk

**Our priorities**

1.5. After hearing a great deal of evidence, we decided to focus on the following areas:

- 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.

**Our report**

1.6. **Chapter 2** sets the **context** for our review by contrasting the current problems with the provision of public transport in Wales with the needs of consumers. Perception of public transport is poor, as demonstrated by the modal shift from public transport to the use of the car. The most popular form of public transport in Wales is the bus, however passenger numbers are in decline. By contrast, despite the recent problems, there has been a steady growth in rail passenger numbers. Community transport has much to offer in tackling social exclusion and also in bridging the gap between bus and rail services in urban areas. In this chapter we outline the roles of the National Assembly and local authorities in improving public transport, in the context of the National Assembly's Transport Framework, which sets out a vision for developing integrated transport.

1.7. Our **vision** for public transport is set out in **Chapter 3**. We want public transport to be integrated, accessible, affordable, and a favoured mode of travel of the people of Wales. It should also act as a positive lever in improving equality of opportunity for all and accessibility for disabled people. We consider how **quality** can be driven up, and suggest that a quality "kite mark" be developed for public transport services in Wales. We also look at the financial aspects – individual affordability, as well as local and national investment – and suggest that regional transport strategies should guide decisions on funding made by the National Assembly, and that this be targeted alongside local authorities' own investment to achieve maximum effect. We also suggest a number of projects that could be taken forward, such as "all mode" information centres and interchange improvements.

1.8. **Chapter 4** assesses the **existing voluntary regional transport consortia** - Mid Wales, SWIFT, SWITCH, TAITH and TIGER – and considers their potential to deliver improved public transport services at local and regional level. We recommend ways in which the consortia can be strengthened by: clarifying the constitutional basis of the consortia, including National Assembly representation; delivering common objectives by allocating joint staff and financial resources; and raising their profile. We suggest that further work be done to establish how individual authorities under relevant legislation would be affected, and whether there is the possibility of using existing legislation to place consortia on a statutory basis.

1.9. We commissioned a factual analysis of **alternative organisational structures** in the UK and

elsewhere in Europe from the Babtie Group, a copy of the Executive Summary is at **Annex 3**. In our view there is a strong case for leadership at an all Wales level, and the National Assembly has supported the introduction of a Passenger Transport Authority in a number of its plenary debates. However, the current Passenger Transport Authority/Executive (PTA/PTE) model does not readily meet the requirements of developing public transport across the whole of Wales, and we suggest that a model be specifically designed to meet the requirements of Wales. In **Chapter 5** we assess the following **options**: an all-Wales PTA; a PTA for the ten South East Wales local authorities on the existing model; developing existing partnership arrangements. Your views are sought on these options in Chapter 8.

1.10. Ways of strengthening **monitoring and evaluation** are suggested in **Chapter 6**. We believe that there should be an evaluation framework for measuring the benefits of targeted public transport investment at national, regional and local levels, which contributes to a base of evidence for future policy development. The role of passengers is key, and they should be involved in drawing up the framework, and involved early on in evaluating individual public transport schemes. We also feel that there is scope for us to learn about what does and doesn't work elsewhere, and apply this in developing more effective public transport services in Wales.

1.11. Our **recommendations** are summarised in **Chapter 7**. In **Chapter 8** we invite your views on **alternative models** for changes in organisational structures that would deliver our vision of improved public transport, namely: an all-Wales PTA; a PTA for the ten South East Wales local authorities on the existing model; developing existing partnership arrangements; or other innovative solutions. Tests for alternative organisational models are listed in **Annex 4**.

# Chapter 2 Public transport today

**Current picture**

2.1. Before setting out our vision for public transport, we need to understand the needs of consumers and identify the current problems with the provision of public transport in Wales. Perception of public transport is poor. This is demonstrated by the modal shift away from public transport and other modes to the use of the car.

2.2 The chart below shows the breakdown of journeys per person per year by main mode between 1985-86. Only 12% of all journeys in Wales were taken by modes other than the car, including public transport.

2.3. The chart below shows the same breakdown of journeys twelve years later (1997-99). Modal shift towards the use of cars/vans (a real increase of 30%) has decreased the percentage of journeys by other modes to 8%.

2.4. The 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 below shows the current usage by mode for this journey - total public transport usage here is 9%. There are variations particularly in urban areas, for example this increases to around 17% in Cardiff.

2.5. 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 that the National Assembly must address in promoting accessibility for those without cars and offering more attractive alternatives to those with cars.

2.6. Not unexpectedly, urban areas have more choice and the geographical differences are pronounced. The level of service is low and in many areas there are problems of accessibility to any form of transport, particularly given that 30% of households in Wales have no car, and this rises to over 40% in Blaenau Gwent and Merthyr Tydfil. The young, elderly, the disabled and people who cannot afford a car are disadvantaged. There are increasing problems of congestion in urban areas, and in the North East and South East these are contributing to slow journey to work times and parking difficulties.

**Buses**

2.7. The most popular form of public transport in Wales is the bus, however in terms of passenger journeys bus passenger numbers declined by 26% between 1988-89 and 1998-99.

2.8. One of the problems faced by bus operators in Wales is high operating costs per passenger

journey – 68p compared to an average of 52p in Great Britain - and costs have risen by 4.6% since 1989-90, while the average in Great Britain has fallen by 5.5%. Bus operating costs per vehicle kilometre in Wales however, are the lowest in Great Britain (in 1999-2000 prices in Wales in were 68p compared to the average of 85p in Great Britain). This highlights a problem faced by bus operators in Wales, especially those operating in rural areas - as bus journeys in rural areas tend to be longer in length, bus operators incur higher costs per passenger journey than in urban areas.

2.9. The Welsh Consumer Council has reviewed the provision of local bus services from the user's perspective. It aimed 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 *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 positive note, 58% or respondents said that they would use buses if services improved.

2.10. Bus users, the report concluded, were likely to be non car owners or people who 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 income 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. Further analysis of the report's conclusions can be found in **Annex 2**.

2.11. Ensuring that public transport develops in a significant way remains a major challenge. The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 is one trigger that will ensure replacement and upgrading of vehicles and rolling stock. However, profitability is lower in Wales than in England leaving less opportunity for investment in new vehicles thereby compounding the image of poor quality. There are a large number of operators, but national companies (Arriva, First Group and Stagecoach) have a significant share of the market and Cardiff Bus, Islwyn Bus and Newport Transport remain in local authority ownership. 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.

**Rail**

2.12. In the case of rail there has been a steady growth in usage and, for example, Valley Lines has increased passengers by 21% over the last four years. The opportunities for rail are restricted by the size of the network with some limited opportunities to re-open freight only lines to passengers. High levels of revenue support are required generally to maintain services and the lack of significant investment in infrastructure over a number of years, until recently, has not been conducive to significant improvements. The Wales and Borders franchise will enable long term decisions to be taken on investment and the National Assembly is already committed to support infrastructure enhancements especially on the Valley Lines, Vale of Glamorgan and Cambrian lines. The National Assembly is currently undertaking a study of the feasibility of introducing a light rail scheme in Cardiff Bay.

**Community transport**

2.13. Community transport is not a clearly defined service and encompasses a range of provision. Traditionally the key focus 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 evidence we have received is that community transport has much to offer in tackling social exclusion both in isolated rural and valleys communities and also in bridging the gap between more conventional bus and rail services in urban areas. Finally, there are several narrow gauge rail operations that are part of the leisure sector, but have in some cases the potential to link into the rail and bus network as well.

**Role of the National Assembly**

2.14. The National Assembly has a key role in ensuring that there is better public transport, particularly through its responsibilities gained under the Transport Act 2000 for providing guidance on the preparation of local transport plans, bus strategies and quality bus partnerships and approval of quality bus contracts. It can set penalties for unreliable services, which are administered by the Transport Commissioner. The National Assembly can introduce variations in concessionary fares and approve proposals for congestion and workplace parking from local authorities. It has significant levers in funding local authority infrastructure through Transport Grant, which includes integrated transport packages for bus and rail developments, and also through revenue support for buses and community transport.

2.15. The Strategic Rail Authority (SRA) is required to consult the National Assembly on its strategies. The National Assembly does not have any regulatory powers affecting the operation of public transport services, which are the responsibility of the Department of Transport, Local Government and the Regions (DTLR), the SRA or the Health and Safety Executive.

**Transport Framework**

2.16. The National Assembly has produced a Transport Framework, which 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.

2.17. A key element in delivering this vision is that within five years Wales will have a much improved public transport system. Long term transport aims are:

- 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.

2.18. 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. 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.

2.19. The National Assembly is committed to sustainable development in all that it does, and this is the guiding principle for the development of an integrated transport system. Transport is itself a cross-cutting priority, being inextricably linked to land use planning, improved public health, a facilitator of economic growth, and a means of tackling social exclusion in remote communities. The National Economic Development Strategy and developing National Spatial Planning Framework both complement the Transport Framework and have common objectives.

**Role of local authorities**

2.20. Local authorities have the key responsibility for developing improved public transport in partnership with operators.

2.21. Local authorities as transport authorities have a duty to produce local transport plans for their areas, including bus strategies, and have a range of powers enabling them to provide bus stations, bus stops and other infrastructure improvements, park and ride facilities, revenue support for socially necessary services and concessionary fares. Through their highway and traffic management responsibilities they are able to enhance opportunities for transport, and planning powers enable them to ensure that public transport is taken into account in new developments.

2.22. Local Authorities provide school and social services transport and can also support community transport. The chart below summarises local authority net expenditure on local roads and transport.

a. 1999-2000 budget estimates

**What is being done**

2.23. Despite the poor perception, much is being done to enable public transport to improve. With support from the National Assembly local authorities in some areas, working through their consortia, have been able to make significant progress in improving infrastructure over the last three years. There are examples across Wales of improvements to bus and rail stations, guided busways, park and ride projects and traffic management improvements that are underway. It will take some time before the impact is felt in improved public transport since many of the projects have yet to be completed, but there are encouraging indications that potentially considerable improvements will be brought about over time. Nevertheless **we have concluded that the challenge of reversing the decline in public transport patronage overall requires more concentrated action through a partnership between operators, local authorities and the National Assembly**.

2.24. In Chapter 3 we put forward suggestions for taking this forward in the context of the National Assembly's Transport Framework.

# Chapter 3 Vision and quality

**Our vision**

3.1. **Our vision is for public transport to be integrated, accessible, affordable and a favoured mode of travel of the people of Wales**. Public transport should enjoy a good reputation, particularly with young people. It should act as a positive lever in improving equality of opportunity - proportionately public transport serves more children and young adults, women, elderly and unemployed people – and significantly improved levels of accessibility for disabled people.

**Ten years from now…**

- A choice of high quality services including rail, bus and community transport, drawing in taxis, and linked to walking and cycling strategies;
- Affordable services which would be attractive, for example, to young people and also for families and people travelling to work;
- Real progress in delivering equal access to public transport, so that people without cars - young and old people, unemployed people and women who use public transport more proportionately - have access to good services;
- Real progress in ensuring that people with disabilities can use the transport system with ease;
- Within overall policies for sustainable development, planning decisions for new developments which include public transport as an essential provision;
- A public transport system which contributes to reducing pollution;
- A Welsh transport 'kite mark', agreed with everyone providing a service, that would set minimum standards, which would be monitored by transport providers, local authorities and the Traffic Commissioner. The image of public transport should be improved and services should be branded as with the Wales and Borders rail franchise.

**Making services more attractive…**

- More frequent services in urban areas which are reliable and safe so that a bus or train is available regularly;
- A network of services including community transport in less densely populated areas - whether urban or rural - which is well advertised and also follows a regular pattern and equally places emphasis on quality and safety;
- An emphasis on modern vehicles, which also comply with best practice in enabling people with disabilities to travel with ease;
- Infrastructure improvements, including guided busways or light rail, which enable congestion to be beaten and attract passengers whether they have cars or not;
- A network of long distance coaches alongside rail services within Wales and beyond so that people have a choice;
- Improved interchanges between different modes of transport and better waiting areas and well sign posted services;
- Improved through ticketing and passenger information through information centres.

**Delivering the vision**

3.2. The key change needed is to convince people that in addition to using their cars they can also travel by public transport. And this means providing access to employment, leisure and welfare facilities by reliable public transport, particularly for those without access to a car.

3.3. This is **our challenge - to improve public transport so that it offers an affordable, accessible and integrated service to all the people of Wales, as well as an attractive alternative to the car**. This calls for a visionary approach backed up with investment – both public and private. We were impressed with the progress made in the European and UK cities we visited which had investment in public transport over a period of time. Public transport can be made accessible and attractive through a variety of measures – such as light rail, guided buses, and imaginative use of traffic management and parking regulations – making competition with the car a reality.

**Elements of quality**

3.4. A key starting point to improve the image of public transport is driving up the **quality** of services, whether they are provided by buses, community transport or rail. We believe that elements of a quality service include:

- Journey time

- Service frequency

- Service reliability

- Affordability – both at an individual and national level

- 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

- Ability and willingness to innovate

**Driving up quality**

3.5. During our visits to European cities we were impressed with the emphasis on quality rather than lowest price in providing services including instances where tendering took place. There is increasing pressure from the European Commission for services to be tendered, but generally elsewhere in Europe there is still large public sector provision of services unlike the UK. While attention is now being given across Europe to increasing competition, it was clear that high quality would remain as the determining factor in considering value for money. We would commend this approach in Wales. We welcome the SRA's commitment to award the Wales and Borders rail franchise on the basis of quality as well as frequency of services and we will continue to press for a package of reliability, safety, frequency and station improvements to build a quality rail network.

3.6. The Transport Act 2000 enables local authorities to implement Bus Quality Partnership schemes, which allow joint local authority and operator measures to develop infrastructure and service improvements. The potential components of a quality partnership are:

| Potential components of a quality partnership | |
|---|---|
| **Operators** | **Local authorities** |
| <ul><li>Minimum service delivery standards</li><li>Vehicle quality standards</li><li>Driver training, conduct and appearance</li><li>Fares and ticketing</li><li>Fixed service revision dates</li><li>Provision of information, traditional and real time, on and off bus (in partnership)</li><li>On-bus selective vehicle detection transponders</li></ul> | <ul><li>Traffic management including, bus priorities, including guided busways, traffic calming and signage</li><li>Enforcement of parking regulations</li><li>Fares and ticketing brokerage</li><li>Passenger infrastructure, construction and maintenance</li><li>Pedestrian systems (in partnership)</li><li>Early notification of contract awards</li><li>Project facilitator to co-ordinate, launch and monitor</li></ul> |

| National Assembly Transport Directorate (Trunk roads) | Police |
|---|---|
| <ul><li>Bus priorities where appropriate</li><li>Traffic management generally</li></ul> | <ul><li>Enforcement of priorities</li><li>Passenger and public safety</li></ul> |

## Quality partnerships

3.7. Quality Partnerships already exist in Wales on a non-statutory basis. In Gwynedd a partnership deals with the problems of small rural operators serving isolated communities and benefits include low floor buses, enhanced and co-ordinated timetables, improved infrastructure and enhanced publicity. Passenger numbers on the Amlwch-Bangor route have increased by nearly 20% over two years with services increasing by 50%. Deeside Quality Bus Partnership has seen patronage increase by up to 22%. Other examples include Conwy, Rhyl-Prestatyn, Neath Port Talbot and a link between Ebbw Vale and Newport.

3.8. We were impressed by the area wide Quality Partnership that is being developed by the Greater Manchester Passenger Transport Executive. This concept would be appropriate for the more urbanised areas of Wales. There will be an opportunity to consider whether bus Quality Contracts should be introduced and further work will need to be undertaken by local authorities before any decision can be taken.

3.9. The legislation requires that the opportunities to achieve the same objectives as would be achieved through Quality Contracts have been tested first. Quality Partnerships will not work unless additionality is demonstrated and resources are not simply switched from other areas of local authority transport spending. In addition, implementation has to be monitored. The role of the Traffic Commissioner is critical, and the current administrative arrangements and relationship with the National Assembly should be reviewed.

3.10. In the case of rail partnerships between local authorities, Railtrack and train operating companies are also achieving similar improvements, and much is being done to improve stations, information and signage and quality of rolling stock with, for example, the upgrading of existing vehicles on the Valley Lines and the introduction of new trains on the North Wales Coast.

3.11. We are also keen to ensure that over time community transport can also develop as an integral part of public transport provision and that common standards will apply.

## Kite mark

3.12. We have explored the possibility of the development of a **quality standard** or **kite mark** for public transport for Wales, that would set minimum standards of quality for the areas outlined above. We recommend that a quality kite mark be developed as part of the work being undertaken on Quality Partnerships and Contracts, could initially cover bus services, and extended to include community transport, rail, and other modes.

*Recommendation 1: that a quality kite mark be developed as part of the work being undertaken on Quality Partnerships and Contracts, initially covering bus services, and extended to include community transport, rail, and other modes.*

## Affordability

3.13. One of the key elements of quality is affordability. Public transport will only be truly accessible if travel is affordable for individuals and their families, particularly in our more socially excluded communities. We welcome the extension of the **concessionary fare scheme** that is providing free bus passes and discounts of at least 50% on buses for pensioners and disabled people in Wales this year to free travel from April 2002. *We believe that there is merit in considering extending the scheme to include community transport and there is a case for considering its extension to taxis on a limited basis, possibly in rural areas with no access to any form of transport. There is also a need to consider the opportunity for young people to travel.* In deciding whether to extend concessions value for money should be demonstrated given the expenditure implications.

## Investment

3.14. Investment is at the heart of any significant improvements. The National Assembly and local authorities need to consider the priority given to transport, and historical levels of under investment have to be addressed. We welcome the increases in capital investment now taking place and additional revenue support through subsidies for unremunerative services. It is necessary to ensure that the latter are well targeted, and consideration should be given to linking capital and revenue investment provided by the National Assembly to the introduction of bus quality partnerships. While it is a widely held view that more revenue support for bus services is required, it is evident that buses are often lightly loaded and the effectiveness of support has to be demonstrated.

*Recommendation 2: that the National Assembly, local authorities and transport operators should address historic levels of under investment in public transport.*

## Key projects

3.15. We wish to highlight some key areas that could be afforded some priority in future investment.

- On our visit to Frankfurt we were impressed by the success of mobility centres in the Rhine-Main region of Germany. The centres cover all forms of transport, ticketing, information, cross reference to social service transport, special needs transport, and involving all forms of communication from personal visits, paper, telephone, internet, and individual requirements.

*We consider there to be potential for piloting "all mode" **information centres** across Wales.* A good start has already been seen with "on-street" information in Cardiff and Neath Port Talbot, to be followed shortly by Swansea. The telephone service provided by Passenger Information Cymru, initially for buses and now being extended to rail is an excellent development. There are also good examples of the Welsh language being used in signage and travel information across Wales.

- We were also impressed by the popularity of **light rail schemes**, which can significantly raise the image of public transport, and welcome the feasibility study underway for a project in Cardiff Bay and the innovative ULTRA project also being developed in Cardiff.

- The **views of passengers** are of paramount importance. It is essential that passengers be involved during all stages of public transport development and improvement. We recognise the need for local authorities to consult on their Local Transport Plans and believe that special efforts should be made to engage those most reliant on public transport, such as young and elderly people and those from socially excluded communities. *We support the Welsh Consumer Council's call for an all Wales group to represent bus users, and believe there is merit in establishing an overarching group to cover all modes of public transport.* This might be achieved through partnership with the rail passengers' statutory council, the National Federation of Bus Users in Wales, and the Disabled Persons' Transport Advisory Committee.

- Nearly all Welsh towns have bus and rail stations on separate sites, and there is little of the fully comprehensive integration embracing all modes seen in European cities such as Amsterdam. ***Interchanges** are an aspect where we considered there to be scope for development.* There has been much good work done, for example in Caerphilly where there is a rail and bus interchange, and in improving rail stations in Cardiff and Neath. There is particularly an opportunity in Cardiff to improve information provision and access between the bus and rail station. Funding has come from a variety of sources including the National Assembly, local authorities, Europe, Railtrack and operating companies.

- **Park and ride** facilities greatly reduce the volume of congestion in towns and cities, as well as providing accessible routes to public transport services, particularly for those living in areas without direct public transport links. We were impressed with the developments by the SWIFT (South Wales Integrated Fast Transit Consortium) and SWITCH (South West Integrated Transport Consortium) consortia, particularly the park and ride facility at Caerphilly station, which also serves as a bus and rail interchange. *We consider there to be considerable scope for development of park and ride facilities and other schemes for reducing congestion in town centres.* Where appropriate local authorities should consider work place and congestion charging schemes, which would require the approval of the National Assembly.

- Young people are the passengers of the future, and we are concerned that the poor quality of some school transport makes it a turn off to using public transport. We have heard that an expanding local service bus market is competing with school transport procurement, with buses required on commercial and school routes, at the same time of the day. *We believe*

*there is merit in setting up a **school transport demonstration project** to consider long term procurement for bespoke school buses.*

- **Community transport** is being reviewed and *we consider there is potential for development as part of the mainstream of provision.*

- **Long distance coach** provision within Wales is also being reviewed, and *we would welcome improvements* that would make this a more accessible form of transport, as well as linking communities across Wales.

- We were impressed with the vision for **walking and cycling** set out by the Cyclists' Touring Club, and await the outcome of the Transport Forum's work based on the SUSTRANS study with interest, since both have an important contribution in any consideration of public transport.

- **Green travel plans** have an important role in bringing together employees and transport operators and we welcome the National Assembly's own progress with its green transport plan, as well as support for local authority initiatives which aim to make a significant contribution in reducing dependence on the car.

***Recommendation 3: that the National Assembly and local authorities working together with operators, passengers and other stakeholders take forward these priorities as funding allows.***

**Delivering the Vision**

3.16. It is evident that improvements cannot be brought about solely within existing local authority boundaries, and we need to build on existing regional partnerships between local authorities, and operators, to deliver the improvements to the public transport system.

3.17. Local authorities are required to prepare bus strategies (by April 2003), that will be incorporated in Local Transport Plans. SWIFT are preparing a regional bus strategy covering all local authorities in their area. We believe that, if we are to deliver integration of services across local authority boundaries, all regional consortia should follow this lead. In our view, preparation of a regional strategy also provides an opportunity for local authorities to consider a holistic approach to public transport planning - including traffic management (both local authority and trunk roads), cycling and walking, rail and community transport developments. We suggest that these strategies be designated as **regional public transport strategies** (on a non statutory basis).

3.18. Different areas will need different solutions. In some urban areas a 'critical mass' improvement should take place so that the impact is large enough to bring about modal shift, e.g. corridors with bus lanes or guided busways, buses triggering traffic lights, real time information, inter-ticketing and SMART cards, which would make buses an attractive alternative. In other areas, particularly in rural areas, accessibility will be the key issue.

*Recommendation 4: that local authorities prepare regional public transport strategies by April 2003 reflecting bus strategies (which are a statutory requirement) and including developments on rail and community transport. These should be prepared on a regional basis to reflect travel patterns insofar as possible.*

3.19. We consider that the role of the National Assembly is to set the overall vision and provide leadership for public transport in Wales, and support local authorities and operators (and any future organisations) in delivering improvements at the regional and local level. Regional public transport strategies should guide decisions on funding made by the National Assembly, with grants linked to achieving targets and objectives set out in the regional strategies and Local Transport Plans. All funding should be dependent on a robust monitoring and evaluation programme being in place (see further discussion in Chapter 6). We also suggest that national investment be targeted alongside local authorities' own investment to achieve maximum effect, and that investment on buses provided by the National Assembly should be linked to the introduction of quality bus partnerships.

*Recommendation 5: that regional transport 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.*

3.20. In Chapter 4 we consider how well the existing structures are working, and whether any changes are needed to improve the delivery of public transport at the local and regional level.

# Chapter 4 Existing organisational structures

**Voluntary regional consortia**

4.1. The development of improved public transport requires implementation arrangements fit for purpose, and the key responsibilities rest with local authorities in their role as transport authorities. The National Assembly in setting the vision, and through its powers to provide guidance and funding, has a critical role in ensuring that developments take place in a co-ordinated way to achieve maximum effect.

4.2. The evidence we have received indicates that twenty-two local authorities working in isolation cannot ensure that a comprehensive public transport system is delivered. This is already recognised by local authorities and they have established consortia to plan and implement developments. They are voluntary groupings that have emerged since local government reorganisation in 1996. The consortia are:

**South East Wales**

- **SWIFT** comprising six authorities, Bridgend, Caerphilly, Cardiff, Merthyr Tydfil, Rhondda Cynon Taff and the Vale of Glamorgan with representatives of various transport operators. Consortium leadership rotates between participating organisations.

- **TIGER** (Transport Integration in the Gwent Economic Region) comprising, Blaenau Gwent, also Caerphilly, Monmouthshire, Newport and Torfaen in partnership with transport operators. Torfaen is lead authority for management.
- They are implementation based groupings as opposed to wider purpose policy groups and both are tied in to the politically and officer serviced SEWTAG (South East Wales Transport Group) which considers strategic and whole region issues.

## South West Wales

- **SWITCH** comprising, Carmarthenshire, Neath Port Talbot, Pembrokeshire and Swansea with Ceredigion having associate status. Neath Port Talbot is currently the lead authority for management. SWITCH is a member led officer served and is broadly equivalent to SEWTAG.

## Mid Wales

- The **Mid Wales** Partnership comprises Powys and Ceredigion with operational links with southern Gwynedd. This is a more informal liaison than the South Wales consortia.

## North Wales

- **TAITH** comprises Ynys Mon, Gwynedd, Conwy, Denbigh, Flintshire and Wrexham. Flintshire and Wrexham also link with Cheshire to promote common working on land use planning, transport and housing within the 'journey to work' area. Authorities have been associated through the North Wales Economic Forum for a long time and this consortium has been established to improve co-operation in planning forward programmes and bids for funding.

## Potential of consortia

4.3. The consortia groupings have varying degrees of formality and remit. In terms of achievement, the more urbanised areas of South East Wales compromising SWIFT and TIGER have made greater progress than the others, with SWIFT in particular being particularly successful in establishing a rail strategy which the National Assembly is supporting through its implementation stages.. Nevertheless, the National Assembly requires some certainty that the voluntary consortia can deliver what is required to bring about significant changes.

4.4. An important dimension is the need to consider **cross-border implications** for public transport. In several parts of Wales, notably North East Wales which has significant links with Cheshire and the North West of England generally, local authorities across the border should be an integral part of any regional consortia arrangements for that area. Consortia in other areas of Wales, where there is significant cross-border travel by public transport, should ensure that there are similar arrangements in place.

4.5. There are a number of issues to be addressed in bringing about improvements, including the **"constitution"** of the consortia. None of the current consortia have their own separate existence

and support staff, and constituent local authorities provide support in different ways. In order to deliver a coherent strategy the consortia will need to have the political will to succeed. We would need to be reassured that local authorities will be prepared to use their powers on planning, traffic and highway management and parking regulations in a targeted way.

4.6. As a first step, we believe that each of the consortia, in drawing up the regional public transport strategies, should agree with constituent partners, including the National Assembly, how the objectives can be delivered. Such an agreement should specify the staff and financial resources allocated to delivering the objectives.

***Recommendation 6: that each consortium agrees with partners, including the National Assembly, how objectives in the regional public transport strategies will be delivered, taking into account linkages with local transport plans (including cross-border travel patterns) and***

***the availability of funding.***

4.7. The Welsh Local Government Association has suggested that **"compacts"** be drawn between local authorities within consortia and the National Assembly. Such agreements would need to cover the role of all partners (including bus and rail companies) and the decision making and accountability roles of local authorities within the consortia. Local authorities have the statutory responsibility for implementation, and we suggest that further work be undertaken on how this would work in practice. Whether consortia can be underpinned by statute, e.g. Local Government Acts 1999 and 2000, is also something we would wish to see explored further.

4.8. There are also implications for **financial resources** and the ability of local authorities to establish joint priorities for funding, while complying with their statutory obligations and Best Value requirements as individual authorities. Concerns have been raised about the ability of local authorities to fund the consortia (existing consortia receive some support from the National Assembly). We suggest that local authorities' own resources and funding from the National Assembly (Transport Grant, local transport services grant, road safety and trunk road) complement each other to obtain maximum impact. Given the success of this ring fencing of capital (and some revenue support) funding, we consider there is merit in hypothecation of part of local authorities' revenue support grant for public transport, and integrated transport in general.

4.9. We recognise that further work needs to be done in developing proposals for strengthened consortia, and we recommend that local authorities take this forward in consultation with the National Assembly.

***Recommendation 7: that local authorities consider how they would establish more robust regional consortia building on existing arrangements so that the National Assembly's vision and regional public transport strategies can be implemented, taking account of local needs***

*and the availability of resources.*

*Recommendation 8: that as part of this consideration local authorities and the National Assembly Cabinet should consider how individual authorities under relevant legislation, e.g. Best Value, would be affected and whether there is the possibility of using existing legislation to place consortia on a statutory basis.*

4.10. The Welsh Local Government Association have welcomed the suggestion of **National Assembly representation on each consortium**, and National Assembly officials already attend SWIFT officer meetings on an observer basis. We suggest that the consortia agree the precise remit and responsibilities of National Assembly representatives, and invite the National Assembly to nominate representatives to each consortium.

*Recommendation 9: that the National Assembly Cabinet considers with local authorities how it should be represented on each consortium and agree the remit of its representatives.*

4.11. In addition, the consortia will need to have **staff with relevant skills** to undertake the work. We are told that staffing restrictions inhibit developments, and suggest that local authorities consider pooling staff through regional consortia so that scarce resources can be used to the best effect. It would also reduce the numbers of authorities which, for example, bus companies have to deal with on individual routes. As well as technical expertise in the consortia, we feel that the National Assembly should offer guidance and expertise to local authorities and other consortia partners and communicate our strategic priorities. We suggest that secondment arrangements be set up between the National Assembly and the consortia partners, in order to maximise skill transfer, and further the understanding of local, regional and national priorities.

4.12. If we are to improve public transport the National Assembly must work in partnership with the consortia and engage directly with local authorities, operators and passengers. We need to **raise the profile** of public transport if we are to convince people that in addition to using their cars they can also travel by public transport. The consortia are ideally placed to advertise the public transport initiatives in their region, and to develop "branding" that passengers can associate with quality services.

*Recommendation 10: that the consortia raise their profile amongst passengers by developing their own "branding" linked to quality services.*

4.13. We have also considered arguments for **rationalising existing consortia to four**, reflecting the National Assembly's economic fora boundaries. This would inevitably require sub divisions in some areas and the effectiveness of this configuration will need to be tested.

*We invite your views on the suitability or otherwise of existing number of regional consortia to deliver improved integrated public transport services.*

# Chapter 5 Alternative organisational structures

## Background

5.1. We commissioned a factual analysis of alternative organisational structures from the Babtie Group. A copy of the Executive Summary is at **Annex 3** and their full report is on our web site www. wales.gov.uk.

5.2. PTAs/PTEs were established under the Transport Act 1968 and there are six in England and one in Scotland. This power no longer exists and any additional ones would require primary legislation. Membership of PTAs reflect the numbers of local authorities within their boundaries, and the general obligations placed on them are similar to local authorities other than in the case of rail where there are significant differences. Their responsibilities have diminished with bus and rail privatisation, but nevertheless, according to the Babtie report, they have been able to secure higher levels of investment than would have been the case otherwise for bus and rail services. They are funded by a mixture of levies on their constituent local authorities and central grants particularly for rail expenditure.

5.3. In addition, the Scottish Executive is able to direct the SRA (provided they do so in line with overall rail policy) on matters relating to the Scotrail franchise where services start and end in Scotland. They are also able to offer guidance on other services that start or end in Scotland. There are variations on these models elsewhere in the UK, but the National Assembly has no equivalent statutory power in the case of rail. The SRA is bound by the Transport Act 2000 to consult on strategic developments and in practice has developed a close working relationship with the National Assembly, which has led to the Wales and Borders franchise being introduced. In Europe generally there is a greater amount of public sector involvement, including higher levels of subsidy and ownership of operating companies, but competitive tendering is increasingly being used partly in response to European Commission requirements.

## Application to Wales

5.4. **There is a strong case to be made for leadership at an all Wales level**. Historically, the Welsh Office concentrated on its trunk roads responsibility and the funding of local authority highways, and only recently has there been a significant effort made to improve public transport. This is welcome, but the National Assembly's Transport Directorate's primary role is one to support local authorities and - while our recommendations that regional public transport strategies should be prepared will go some way in bringing about a coherency in both planning and implementation - there is still a gap to be filled at the all Wales level.

5.5. The National Assembly's responsibilities for buses have been enhanced in the Transport Act 2000 enabling it to provide guidance to local authorities on the preparation of local transport plans, bus strategies, quality bus partnerships and approve quality bus contracts. It can also set penalties for the Traffic Commissioner to implement and has to approve proposals from local authorities on workplace or congestion changing. However, the National Assembly does not have regulatory powers affecting the bus or rail industry and the degree to which these should transfer to the National Assembly or a PTA will need to be addressed.

5.6. Responsibilities for bus regulation rests with the DTLR in terms of such issues as vehicle standards and implementation of legislation affecting disabled people. The Health and Safety Executive has responsibilities for both bus and rail and report to the DTLR, while the Office of the Rail Regulator has statutory responsibilities especially for Railtrack's operations. All these require a standard approach and it would be difficult to work up a practical case for handling them differently. These responsibilities have not been vested in PTA/PTEs. Potentially, there is a case for ensuring that there is greater synergy between the National Assembly or a PTA and local authorities in the case of the Traffic Commissioner. There is also the potential for a greater involvement in rail strategic and operational matters handled by the SRA.

**Role and functions of a Welsh PTA**

5.7. The National Assembly has supported the introduction of a PTA in a number of its plenary debates. However, the current PTA/PTE model does not readily meet the requirements of developing public transport across the whole of Wales. They are urban organisations (although with a rural dimension in some cases) ranging in size from 2.50 million in the case of Greater Manchester to 1.10 million in Tyne and Wear. In addition to buses they have a significant rail interest. **It would be a model, therefore, specifically designed to meet the requirements of Wales.** It is necessary to consider how a PTA for Wales would achieve our objectives and we have taken account of the report published in 1999 by the Welsh Transport Advisory Group, chaired by Mr Peter Hain, and the Welsh Consumer Council's report 'Bus Travel in Wales' published earlier this year.

5.8. Against the background of a largely de-regulated bus industry, and a fragmented rail industry, the PTA could set the strategic agenda for the development of integrated public transport (bus, rail and community). Through its funding powers it could ensure could ensure implementation across Wales in line with its targets for buses and community transport. It would need to draw on policies and strategies in local authority transport plans and regional public transport strategies in achieving an all Wales approach, while recognising the different issues arising in different parts of Wales.

5.9. The impact on local authorities would be significant, since they have the primary responsibility for supporting bus and community transport services, but against a background of a largely de-regulated market. It would mean taking funds from local authorities' current expenditure, on buses, community transport and any rail revenue expenditure, and reallocating them in line with the PTA's targets if it decided to operate through its own divisional structure. Alternatively, it could operate through consortia of local authorities and in effect would be directing them on the use of their own resources.

5.10. In addition local authorities' responsibilities for land use planning, highway and traffic management and parking regulations are critically important in ensuring the transport dimension is taken into account in planning decisions and in taking forward, for example, bus quality partnerships. As with the case of PTA/PTEs co-operation between the PTA and local authorities would be essential to make real progress on buses and community transport services.

5.11. In the case of rail, it would need to ensure that it secured the same powers as the Scottish Executive to direct the SRA in the case of the Wales and Border franchise and to offer guidance on services starting or finishing in Wales (provided by Virgin, First-Great-Western) and the Wessex franchise, which will have responsibilities for services from Bristol to Cardiff. Issues relating to the cross border nature of services would have to be addressed. Additionally, it would be necessary to determine how far some responsibilities could be transferred from the SRA in terms of specific management and where they would be placed. Valley Lines operate wholly within Wales and in one scenario responsibility might be delegated in their case by the SRA to the PTA.

5.12. Implementation would depend on a number of factors and would require primary legislation;

- Whether the PTA was a part of the National Assembly or an Assembly Sponsored Body;

- Whether it had a divisional management arrangement or whether it operated through local authority consortia;

**Replicate existing PTA/PTE model**

5.13. **A different option would be to establish a PTA/PTE in South East Wales.** In the evidence we have received we have been told that different parts of Wales require different solutions. In South East Wales much is being done to bring about a cohesive approach but implementation of policies and strategies is dependent on ten local authorities working together. The area has a population of 1.40 million and is marginally larger than South Yorkshire PTA/PTE which has 1.26 million and shares many of the characteristics of South East Wales. A PTA/PTE for this area would have Valley Lines as a significant rail provider and a number of bus operators together with the opportunity to promote community transport.

5.14. As indicated above, local authorities would retain their responsibilities for land use planning and highway and traffic management. In many respects this is the area which is likely to face the greatest problems in terms of congestion. Increasingly, people travel to work in Cardiff and Newport from Valley communities and a region wide planning and implementation mechanism is needed so that access to job and leisure can be provided by modern public transport services. There are similar problems in North East Wales but covering a smaller population and needs to be addressed in conjunction with neighbouring English local authorities. We do not think there is such a strong case for a PTA/PTE model for that area.

**Partnership between National Assembly and local authorities**

5.15. **A further option would be to build on existing arrangements**, while seeking a degree of statutory change to enable the National Assembly to have a greater say over the Traffic Commissioner and rail services. The National Assembly has published a Transport Framework and its current powers, especially funding together with the recently acquired ones in the Transport Act 2000, can achieve a great deal provided there is a partnership with local authorities and support from operating companies and voluntary organisations involved in community transport.

5.16. The National Assembly would provide the all Wales leadership and take on responsibilities outlined in para 5.8, but would not change local authorities' existing statutory powers so they would continue, for example, to handle local bus subsidies. A partnership agreement would need to be established with local authorities to ensure that implementation of the National Assembly's targets could be achieved. Local authorities should also consider the possibility of establishing consortia on a statutory basis as indicated in Chapter 4. In any event we consider that there should be a major change in the way local authorities operate in South East Wales. This option would require the National Assembly to work in close partnership with local authorities and for their part they would need to commit themselves to deliver agreed programmes.

5.17. In this scenario, the National Assembly would need to explore further whether it could obtain powers of direction over the SRA on the lines of the Scottish model. In addition if a consortium could be placed on a statutory basis in South East Wales the possibility of delegating responsibility for the Valley Lines from the SRA could also be pursued.

**Conclusion**

5.18. It is essential that any changes in structures make a difference in delivering our vision of improved public transport outlined earlier, and tests for alternative organisational models are listed in **Annex 4**. **We welcome views on the options above**, and invite other innovative suggestions for improving structures. See Chapter 8 for further details.

# Chapter 6 Monitoring and evaluation

6.1. Good monitoring and evaluation should be able to provide robust evidence which can attribute observable effects to actions undertaken as part of a programme or policy, whilst taking into account what would have happened anyway in the absence of the policy in question. Historically, monitoring and evaluation of transport programmes has been poor.

6.2. It is essential that all investment in public transport policies and programmes is monitored effectively and that there is an evaluation of its impact in improving public transport services. Evaluation can help us make improvements and learn how to avoid mistakes in the future. It will also enable us to accumulate a body of evidence of 'what works in Wales' over time, thus placing future

policy development on an evidence base. Monitoring and evaluation should be built into all new projects from the beginning, with monitoring at regular stages throughout, with formal independent evaluations at mid term and the end of the project. Monitoring and evaluation should be part of the same review process and linked to the objectives of project and wider public transport objectives.

6.3. Adequate provision should be set aside for monitoring and evaluation, as data collection can be a costly exercise, and overall project funding should be contingent on a monitoring and evaluation framework being in place. Public transport policies and programmes do not exist in a vacuum, and the framework should take into account evaluation of other initiatives, including those from other policy fields or organisations, where the policy actions work together to bring about change.

6.4. We suggest that a framework be drawn up covering public transport at national, regional and local levels, and welcome the work now underway in establishing assessment criteria in the context of the Transport Framework. This will offer a common evaluation system for all public transport investment, with sets of criteria for differing scales and types of projects. For example, 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.

***Recommendation 11: that the National Assembly and local authorities agree an evaluation framework for measuring the benefits of targeted public transport investment at national, regional and local levels, focused on delivering improvements and avoiding future mistakes.***

***Recommendation 12: that evaluation results of public transport policies, programmes and individual schemes across Wales be collected as a body of evidence of 'what works in Wales' over time, providing a base for future policy development.***

6.5. The National Census data contains relevant aggregate level data, but bespoke data would need to be captured to measure the success of projects at individual level. Data should be both quantitative and qualitative, to reflect the fact that transport interventions 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.

6.6. We welcome the current National Assembly review of data collection, and believe that the National Assembly Cabinet and local authorities should agree a framework for measuring the benefits of targeted public transport investment. The key issue for local authorities, and for the National Assembly in setting targets is to ensure that they are both meaningful, and can be tracked back accurately to the transport interventions that have been funded.

6.7. We suggest that passengers be involved in drawing up the evaluation framework, to ensure that evaluation includes those qualitative measures that matter to them. Passengers' views should also be sought as part of evaluating individual public transport schemes, and they should be consulted early on in the process, in order that their questions along with other stakeholders are addressed by evaluations.

*Recommendation 13: that passengers be involved in drawing up the evaluation framework, and involved early on in evaluating individual public transport schemes.*

6.8. During our review we have found limited examples of drawing upon evidence of 'what works' elsewhere, that is outside Wales and the UK. In our view, all those involved in planning and implementing public transport policy in Wales should learn about what does and doesn't work elsewhere, and consider how we can learn from this in developing more effective public transport services in Wales.

*Recommendation 14: that all those involved in planning and implementing public transport policy in Wales should learn about what does and doesn't work elsewhere, and consider how we can learn from this in developing more effective public transport services in Wales.*

# Chapter 7 Summary of recommendations

**Recommendation 1**: that a **quality kite mark** be developed as part of the work being undertaken on Quality Partnerships and Contracts, initially covering bus services, and extended to include community transport, rail, and other modes.

**Recommendation 2:** that the National Assembly, local authorities and transport operators should **address historic levels of under investment in public transport**.

**Recommendation 3**: that the National Assembly and local authorities working together with operators, passengers and other stakeholders take forward the following priorities, as funding allows:

- development of a **quality standard** or **kite mark** for public transport for Wales, that would set minimum standards of quality for public transport;

- extend the **concessionary fare scheme** to include community transport, and taxis on a limited basis, and consider the opportunity to support travel by young people;

- pilot "all mode" **information centres** across Wales;

- feasibility studies of **light rail schemes**;

- establish an overarching **all Wales passenger group** to cover all modes of public transport;

- develop **interchanges** between modes of public transport;
- develop **park and ride** facilities;
- set up a **school transport demonstration project** to consider long term procurement for bespoke school buses;

- develop **community transport** as part of the mainstream of provision;

- improve **long distance coach** provision within Wales.

**Recommendation 4**: that local authorities prepare **regional public transport strategies** by April 2003 reflecting bus strategies (which are a statutory requirement) and including developments on rail and community transport. These should be prepared on a regional basis to reflect travel patterns insofar as possible.

**Recommendation 5**: that **regional transport 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.

**Recommendation 6**: that each consortium agrees with partners, including the National Assembly, **how objectives in the regional public transport strategies will be delivered**, taking into account linkages with local transport plans (including cross-border travel patterns) and the availability of funding.

**Recommendation 7**: that local authorities consider how they would establish more **robust regional consortia** building on existing arrangements so that the National Assembly's vision and regional public transport strategies can be implemented, taking account of local needs and the availability of resources.

**Recommendation 8**: that as part of this consideration local authorities and the National Assembly Cabinet should consider how individual authorities under relevant legislation, e.g. Best Value, would be affected and whether there is the possibility of **using existing legislation to place consortia on a statutory basis**.

**Recommendation 9**: that the National Assembly Cabinet considers with local authorities how **the National Assembly should be represented on each consortium** and agree the remit of its representatives.

**Recommendation 10**: that the **consortia raise their profile** amongst passengers by developing their own "branding" linked to quality services.

**Recommendation 11**: that the National Assembly and local authorities **agree an evaluation framework for measuring the benefits of targeted public transport investment** at national, regional and local levels, focused on delivering improvements and avoiding future mistakes.

**Recommendation 12**: that evaluation results of public transport policies, programmes and individual schemes across Wales be collected as **a body of evidence of 'what works in Wales'** over time, providing a base for future policy development.

**Recommendation 13**: that **passengers be involved in drawing up the evaluation framework**,

and involved early on in evaluating individual public transport schemes.

**Recommendation 14**: that **all those involved in planning and implementing public transport policy in Wales should learn about what does and doesn't work elsewhere**, and consider how we can learn from this in developing more effective public transport services in Wales.

# Chapter 8 Consultation

8.1. We **welcome your views** on the following issues:

**Existing organisational structures** (see Chapter 4)

- the suitability or otherwise of existing number of regional consortia to deliver improved integrated public transport services.

**Options for organisational change** (see Chapter 5)

- Establishing a Passenger Transport Authority (PTA) for Wales. This could be within the National Assembly or a separate Assembly Sponsored Body (ASB). Its regional structure could be divisions of the National Assembly or ASB. Alternatively, it could work through consortia of local authorities;

- Establishing a PTA/PTE (Passenger Transport Executive) for the ten South East Wales local authorities on the existing model;

- Developing existing arrangements with the National Assembly building on its Transport Framework and using its funding and other powers under the Transport Act 2000 to provide leadership. Local authorities possibly organising themselves on a statutory basis particularly in South East Wales would work in partnership with the National Assembly to deliver specific targets.

- Other innovative solutions.

8.2. Additional powers of direction would be sought on the Scottish model for rail and the possibility of delegated responsibility for Valley Lines would be pursued in all cases.

8.3. In establishing any new organisation value for money has to be demonstrated, and we wish all respondents to **explain the benefits** which would be achieved and the estimated **financial cost** in each particular case. Tests for alternative organisational structures are listed in **Annex 4**.

**Responding**

8.4. Your response, in either English, Welsh or bilingually, should be sent to the Environment, Planning and Transport Committee by **Friday 12 October 2001**. It would be helpful if it could be emailed to us at environment.plan@wales.gsi.gov.uk. If you do not have access to email, you can send us your response by post to the following address:

Environment, Planning and Transport Committee

National Assembly for Wales

Cardiff Bay

Cardiff

CF99 1NA

8.5. If you have any queries or would like to discuss your response prior to sending it to us, please contact the Committee Clerk, Siwan Davies on 029 2089 8501 or by email: siwan.davies@wales.gsi.gov.uk

**Next steps**

8.6. We may publish consultation responses received electronically on our website, and place hard copies of those received by post in our library. Normally, the name and address (or part of the address) of an author are published along with a response, as this gives credibility to the consultation exercise. If you do not wish to be identified as the author of your response, or do not wish your response to be published, please state this expressly in your response.

8.7. Once we have considered all responses, we plan to publish our final report and recommendations, and commend it to the National Assembly in full plenary session, before the end of the year.

<div align="right">**Annex 1**</div>

# Respondents

The following organisations responded to the committee's invitation to submit written evidence. Those marked with an * also attended a meeting of the committee to discuss their views. Full copies of the responses are available on the National Assembly website www.wales.gov.uk

- Age Concern Cymru

- Association of Transport Co-ordinating Officers*
- Countryside Council for Wales*
- Community Transport Association*
- Confederation Passenger Transport Wales*
- Conwy County Borough Council*
- Campaign for Protection of Rural Wales*
- Cyclists Touring Club Cymru*
- Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee
- Department for the Environment, Transport and the Regions
- Disability Rights Commission*
- Disability Wales
- Environment Agency Wales*
- Freight Transport Association
- Institute of Logistics and Transport*
- Institution of Highways and Transportation*
- Mid Wales Partnership*
- North Wales Economic Forum (Transportation Panel)*
- Pembrokeshire Access Group
- Prism Rail*
- [Royal National Institute for the Blind]
- SWITCH*
- SWIFT*
- TIGER*
- Welsh Consumer Council*
- Welsh Local Government Association*
- Welsh National Parks Authorities*

The committee also heard from the following experts:

- Professor David Begg, Chair of the Commission for Integrated Transport
- Professor Stuart Cole, Director of Transport Studies Research Unit, University of Glamorgan

**Annex 2**

# Further background

### Quality of bus services in Wales

The Welsh Consumer Council has identified a number of key issues that effect the quality of bus services in Wales, such as, reliability, speed, safety and comfort. The bus users in a recent survey conducted by the Welsh Consumer Council were asked about these issues. The table below summarises the findings.

**Table A2.1: Quality of local bus service**

|  | Bus users | | |
|---|---|---|---|
|  | Yes | No | Don't know |
| Is the service generally reliable? | 70% | 26% | 4% |
| Is the journey generally fast enough? | 73% | 21% | 7% |
| Is the ride comfortable? | 75% | 19% | 6% |
| Do you feel safe on the bus at night? | 42% | 22% | 36% |

Source: Welsh Consumer Council, 'Bus Travel in Wales - A Consumer's Journey', January 2001

70% of the bus users responded that they were generally satisfied with the reliability of the service, 26% reported being dissatisfied. There were noticeable regional variations regarding reliability, with 44% of users in the Valleys, 29% in West South Wales and 28% in Cardiff/South East Wales, reporting dissatisfaction with the reliability of the service, compared to only 13% from Mid/West Wales and 12% from North Wales.

21% of the bus users reported dissatisfaction with the duration of bus journeys. With users in West South Wales (28%) and the Valleys (24%) being notably less satisfied than the users in the other regions.

19% of the bus users expressed dissatisfaction with the comfort of the journey. Again there were regional variations. 28% of bus users in Cardiff/South East Wales and 24% of the Valley users expressed discomfort compared to users in the other regions.

The Welsh Consumer Council survey showed that safety at night is a real issue for bus passengers. 42% of the respondents reported feeling safe on a bus at night, with 30% of women feeling safe and 56% of men feeling safe. Feelings of safety also dropped rapidly with age. 23% of those aged 65 and over reported feeling safe at night compared to 70% for those aged between 16 and 24. Regional variations were again apparent, with 31% of bus users in West South Wales, 32% in the Valleys, 30% in Cardiff/South East Wales reporting feeling unsafe on busses at night as opposed to only 6% of users in Mid/West Wales and 7% in North Wales.

In the Welsh Consumer Council survey a quality of service average was calculated for each of the five regions. 27.6% of respondents were dissatisfied with the service in West South Wales, 29.8% in the Valleys, and 25% in Cardiff/South East Wales. The table below summarises the results.

**Table A2.2: Quality of service (average) across the regions**

| Are you satisfied with the overall service? | Region | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | All regions | North Wales | Mid/West Wales | West South Wales | The Valleys | Cardiff/ South East Wales |
| Yes | 65.5% | 72.2% | 74.8% | 59.6% | 59.8% | 62.6% |
| No | 21.8% | 11.6% | 12.6% | 27.6% | 29.8% | 25.0% |
| Don't know | 12.8% | 15.6% | 12.8% | 12.8% | 10.4% | 12.2% |

Source: Welsh Consumer Council, 'Bus Travel in Wales - A Consumer's Journey', January 2001

**Annex 3**

# Report: Organisational Structures for Transport Planning

The following is an Executive Summary of the report 'Organisational Structures for Transport Planning' commissioned from Babtie Group. A full copy of the report is available on our website www.wales.gov.uk

**The National Assembly for Wales**

**Organisational Structures for Transport Planning**

Final Report

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

**Background**

This report was commissioned by the National Assembly for Wales (NAW) to review current models and institutional structures for the planning of public transport services in the United Kingdom and parts of Europe.

**In Europe**

The report identifies the central planning approach in Holland where strategic land use planning, highways and public transport planning is given strong leadership from central government. Local

authorities at county and district levels then form local partnerships to develop local schemes and systems. The result of this process is a fully integrated public transport system with extensive bus/ rail and bus/ bus interchange facilities and nation-wide ticketing system.

In Germany the structure of government includes federal, regional (Lander) and local government. A system of fuel taxes hypothecated to the provision of transport services ensures a regular flow of funds. Public transport is organised on a sub-regional basis with structures in many ways similar to UK PTAs and PTEs. All bus services are provided by separate companies, subsidised on a network basis (often by agreement)

In France a system of local employment taxes again offers a source of funding for major public transport investment as well as subsidised fares. The mayoral system with a scrutinising elected body is the usual model in local government.

## In Scotland

Scotland is unique in having powers to "direct" the SRA in respect of the all-Scotland rail franchise (Scotrail). In addition Strathclyde PTE is a significant force in the western industrialised area. Otherwise a system of unitary authorities operates on public transport matters in much the same way as Welsh unitary authorities.

## In Northern Ireland

State ownership of most public transport services results in a model similar to that in Britain 20 years ago. Planning is generally carried out at a national level, with the bus and rail operations controlled through the Northern Ireland Transport Holding Company. Rail services enjoy capital and revenue funding, whilst bus services receive some capital funding but no revenue support. Local authorities have little influence on public transport.

## British Passenger Transport Authorities and Executives (PTAs and PTEs)

These were established under the 1968 Transport Act to promote the development of integrated public transport networks in seven major conurbations (London is a separate case). Initially responsible for local rail services (Section 20), the PTEs also were major providers of bus services. Subsequent legislation redefined the "designated areas" of each PTA/ PTE and resulted in divestment of bus operations. Two PTEs are train operators (Tyne and Wear Metro and Glasgow Underground), whilst three have procured light rail systems under various contract arrangements.

Each PTA/ PTE remains responsible for rail services in their area, and has the special status of "co-signatory" to franchise agreements established by the Strategic Rail Authority (SRA). Various arrangements for sharing revenue risk apply, although in England any gain by a PTE is ultimately passed back to DETR. Strathclyde PTE is able to retain any revenue surplus.

## The Powers of the National Assembly for Wales on Public Transport Matters

The NAW has few direct powers on public transport matters, perhaps the most significant is the control exercised over local (transport) authorities through the Local Transport Plan (LTP) process which involves issuing guidelines and approving funding through Transport Grant and other schemes.

In respect of rail services the NAW can influence the appointment of one member of the Board of the SRA, but otherwise has only an advisory role as a consultee.

**Issues to be considered in strengthening public transport planning in Wales**

The report identifies a number of issues that it is suggested should be considered as a strategy evolves for developing the institutions in support of public transport in Wales. These are:

- The need for public transport to have strong and confident leadership
- Accountability
- Local consultation
- Subsidiarity
- Boundary issues
- Rural areas
- Consistency with land use and highway planning
- Centre of excellence
- Balancing modes
- Rail franchising and the SRA
- Viability and critical mass
- Revenue v capital argument
- Revenue risk
- Sources of funding
- Highway powers
- Land use planning
- Social inclusion
- Quality and monitoring

**Possible models for Wales**

From the analysis of different UK and European models it is possible to detect a series of potential structures that may be appropriate for the NAW to consider as it seeks to develop more effective public transport systems in Wales.

The first over-arching issue is the institutional relationships between land use, highways and public transport planning. These could be achieved through a central organisation (like Northern Ireland or to some extent Holland), or fragmented with political and consultative bonding as is generally more common.

The next issue concerns the territorial scale of any such organisation that carries public transport

responsibility. The structure could be National, Regional or Local, with the principle of subsidiarity important, but balanced against the costs and effectiveness of the organisation. Variations may apply in different locations when dealing with buses or trains. Arising from this consideration comes the structure of political accountability and the potential direct involvement of the NAW and/ or local authorities.

**Powers to implement**

The report goes into some detail on the current powers of the NAW and the new powers necessary to achieve some of the permutations described above.

In particular the creation of a designated PTA and PTE would require primary legislation, as would a major shift in responsibilities of the SRA.

However should the NAW determine a clear picture of the favoured structure for taking forward public transport planning, then the practicalities and legislative requirements can be more precisely assessed.

One further important point that must be taken into account is the potential central funding mechanism for both rail and bus services, and the potential impact on other budgets.

It is clear, however, that in many respects the NAW has the ability to influence change through the strengthening of the various formal and informal groupings that already exist throughout Wales, including by creating unifying boards.

**Tests**

The report sets out a number of tests that might be considered when judging the various organisational models.

**Babtie Group**

**May 2001**

<div align="right">

**Annex 4**

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# Tests for alternative organisational structures

Extract from page 32 of Babtie's report 'Organisational Structures for Transport Planning'.

**The Tests**

The following tests are considered the most relevant in making a final decision on the most

appropriate model or combination of models should it be decided to proceed with institutional change.

- Relevance to area

Whether the organisation would be perceived as meeting the needs of the travelling public

- Accountability

Executive and political structure that is effective and balanced

- Development of an integrated public transport network

Able to make progress towards the aims of the National Assembly

- Quality of political decision making

Attracts sufficient politicians of sufficient calibre

- Effective rail powers

Able to effectively influence the rail franchise process

- Effective bus powers

Able to deliver an integrated network

- Effective highways powers

Able to strike a fair balance on investment

- Influencing land use planning

Ability to influence land use planning from a public transport perspective

- Impact on passenger travel

Ability to stimulate public transport ridership

- Impact on freight travel

Impact on carriage of freight

- Capital

Ability to attract capital funds

- Revenue

Ability to attract revenue funds

- Achieving best value

Meeting best value criteria

- Skills

Making best use of scarce skills

- Easily established

Legislative requirements to effect changes

- Stability