

Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru	National Assembly for Wales
Y Pwyllgor Menter a Busnes	Enterprise and Business Committee
Ymchwiliad i'r Blaenoriaethau ar gyfer dyfodol Seilwaith y Rheilffyrdd yng Nghymru	Inquiry into the Priorities for the future of Welsh Rail Infrastructure
WRI 24	WRI 24
Trafnidiaeth Canolbarth Cymru (TraCC)	Mid Wales Transport Partnership (TraCC)



Enterprise and Business Committee  
National Assembly for Wales  
Pierhead Street  
Cardiff  
Cf99 1NA

Dyddiad  
Date

14<sup>th</sup> January 2016

Gofynnwch am  
Please ask for

Ann Elias

Linell uniongyrchol  
Direct line

01970633539

Fy nghyf  
My ref

TraCC/ Gen/ 2016

Eich cyf  
Your ref

Ebost  
Email

[Ann.elais@ceredigion.gov.uk](mailto:Ann.elais@ceredigion.gov.uk)

Dear Sirs,

## Consultation Inquiry into the Priorities for the future of Welsh Rail Infrastructure

Thank you for providing the opportunity for the regional transport partnership to comment upon priorities for the future of Welsh Rail Infrastructure from our perspective.

Our responses are as follows to each of your questions:-

- *High level priorities for the development of rail infrastructure to provide the capacity and connectivity necessary to support the social and economic well-being of Wales;*

Currently prioritisation of rail infrastructure is assessed on an UK bases, and therefore Wales is competing with larger markets, in order to achieve similar investments.

Being able to identify the priorities for Wales and having access to a Welsh funding stream, would see faster delivery for Welsh projects.

- *How far Welsh Government's rail infrastructure priorities, including those in the National Transport Finance Plan, and the Ministerial Task Force on North Wales Transport report meet the needs of Wales;*

Neither the NTFP nor MTFNWT have considered there investment requirements within the context of impacts upon Wales as a whole. Therefore the impact of large spending requirements such as the proposed rail electrification in both North and South Wales does not consider the impact upon Mid Wales in there assesments.

- *How the development and exploitation of rail infrastructure in England affects Wales, and vice versa;*

The development of any new infrastructure can provide new opportunities, however because the railway lines in Mid Wales ( Cambrian lines and Heart of Wales Line) are effectively considered by the industry as branch lines, our ability to complete for prioritisation is often difficult.

Both the development of HS2 and the Electrification of the North Wales line will make onward journeys faster. The biggest challenge that Mid Wales has is to attract journeys into Wales, as well as providing the ability to travel to wider destinations without the need to change trains at Shrewsbury.

The frequency of our services provides the greatest benefits of achieving both these outcomes.

- *The impact on Wales of key planned developments in England including High Speed Rail, electrification, Northern Power House / Transport for the North, and wider devolution of responsibility for rail within England;*

The biggest threat to our lines is the ability to obtain further route paths through to Birmingham International to obtain our full hourly service, on the Cambrian Main Line.

One of our biggest economic draw to the region, was the use of Cambrian lines for steam driven locomotives specials. However due to the installation of the ERTMS signaling system the Cambrian lines can no longer be used by steam, unless a Network Rail Class 97 is attached to the front of the engine to haul the special.

- *How Welsh Government can best engage with and influence infrastructure developments in England and the development of passenger and freight services using the network;*

A partnership approach between England and Wales would provide an opportunity to consider the best outcome for both regions, and ensure our current services are not compromised.

- *Whether the periodic review process meets the needs of Wales and takes account of the needs of Welsh passenger and freight users, and how this should be developed;*

Reviewing plans every 5 years is an effective way to ensure that amendments in priorities are fully considered. The difficulty for Wales is that the Welsh Route Study will compete with other area of the UK for priority within their funding programmes.

- *The effectiveness of the Network Rail Wales Route and whether the approach to delivery of network management, maintenance, renewal and enhancement functions are effective in delivering value for money, capacity, frequency, speed, reliability and handling disruption for passengers and freight users in Wales;*

It is often very difficult to co-ordinate all of the different functions of Network Rail, often there are no joined up thinking. If we had a whole line approach to delivery, this could provide cost savings and stop conflicting views over how best to deliver improvements.

- The fact that funding for Welsh rail infrastructure is not devolved *advantages, disadvantages, opportunities and risks potentially associated with devolution.*

If Wales had the ability to decide where to spend funding, they would see an accelerated delivery programme, because they would not be competing with the rest of the UK where there is often greater demands, due to passenger numbers.

However, in recent years we have seen the coastal rail network affected by storm surges resulting in track damage and flooding. Without the ability to mobilize UK resources there is a risk that Wales would neither have the expertise's or the finances to re-instate the network.

Much of this Cambrain Coast line also forms the primary flood defense for many communities, and without the ability to maintain the rail infrastructure could mean more flooding.

Yours Sincerely,

Councillor Alun Williams  
Chair of TraCC (Mid Wales Transport Partnership)