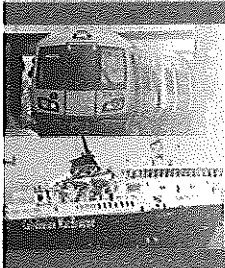


Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru / National Assembly for Wales

Pwyllgor yr Economi, Seilwaith a Sgiliau/ Economy, Infrastructure and Skills
Committee

Masnachfrait Rheilffyrdd a chyflwyno Metro / Rail Franchise and the Metro

Ymateb gan Undeb Cenedlaethol y Gweithwyr Rheilffordd, Morwrol a Thrafnidiaeth /
Evidence from National Union of Rail Maritime and Transport Workers



National Union of Rail Maritime and Transport Workers



Economy, Infrastructure & Skills Committee
National Assembly for Wales,
Ty Hywel,
Cardiff Bay,
CF99 1NA.

28 February 2017

Dear Colleagues,

Economy, Infrastructure & Skills Committee Consultation Rail Franchise & The Metro

The National Union of Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers (RMT) welcomes the opportunity to respond to the Economy, Infrastructure & Skills Committee Consultation *Rail Franchise & The Metro*. The RMT is the largest of the rail unions and organises 80,000 members across all sectors of the transport industry. We represent and negotiate on behalf of our members with some 150 employers and we are the only rail union representing all grades in Wales.

In order to ensure that the franchise meets the needs of current and future travellers throughout the franchise area, and deliver value for money for both passengers and the taxpayer, RMT believes that a number of matters need to be addressed. These include:

Rail Devolution

RMT believes that Network Rail should not be fragmented and/or privatised. It is essential to ensure that the Welsh Government is not used to further advance the fragmentation of Network Rail. Network Rail's successful expansion of railway capacity and the ability to direct national income to cross invest across England, Scotland and Wales should be recognised and protected.

RMT believes that economies of scale are best achieved through a centralised structure and that such a structure should include strategic control and management, economic cohesion, industrial integration, social unity and cohesion of the railway as a whole. Additionally the setting of strategic, economic, social and technical policy directions can only be achieved efficiently when undertaken centrally. The coordination of activity between train and track is another function where a national centre can gain improvements, in addition to raising revenue from real estate and managing (with a view to reducing) the rate at which debt is accrued.

Where there is the potential for genuine rail devolution, on elements of the network which are almost entirely self-contained and where there is already established a significant level of political devolution with the capacity (as is the case in Wales), both in funding and expertise, to manage a section of the network this should be limited to passenger train operations (not infrastructure) and RMT wish to reiterate that Network Rail's functions should include acting as a "guiding mind" for such endeavours in rail operations.

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In relation to passenger train operations, RMT believes that the Welsh Government should be granted powers similar to those enjoyed by the Scottish Government, including the ability to operate rail passenger services in the public sector.

RMT is also concerned that the so-called not-for-profit concession model is being advocated by some forces in Welsh politics as an alternative to genuine public ownership. Such a model, as that used by Merseytravel for the Merseyrail, does in fact continue to pay very substantial dividends to the private operator of the concession (in some cases amounting to almost 25% of passenger revenue, which alternatively could be used to invest in services or reduce ticket prices).

Rolling Stock

RMT is concerned at the specification of new rolling stock where it is being introduced across the rail network. We are particularly concerned that new rolling stock is often specified to be capable at running without a second safety critical member of staff on-board (DOO/DCO), a practice which increases risk to both passengers and staff. Current and future passengers should be able to expect adequately staffed rail services which recognise the following points:

- RMT believes there should be a specified minimum number of staff on every train and this must, as an absolute minimum, be a Driver and a Train Guard with a safety critical operational role.
- RMT believes that drivers should focus only on driving the train. There should be no Driver Only Operation (DOO), Driver Controlled Operation (DCO) and Driver Door Operation (DDO) specified within franchise documentation.
- RMT and passengers recognise the benefit of having a second member of staff on every train and properly staffed stations. In respect of train and station staff the contract must be specified to maximise the availability of such staff for passengers. Stations and trains should be staffed on a first to last service basis as adopted by Transport for London and should be full time directly employed staff and not agency workers or sub-contractors

RMT responded to the earlier Welsh Government Consultation 'Setting the Direction for Wales and the Borders Rail' and the UK Government Welsh Affairs Committee and I have attached both for further information.

RMT has engaged positively with the Welsh Government in the past, and looks forward to continuing to develop that relationship in the best interests of passengers and railway staff in Wales.

We are also available to give oral evidence and would welcome the opportunity to do so.

Yours sincerely



Mick Cash
General Secretary