

Petition: Reopen Crumlin Railway Station

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 19 Medi 2017
Petitions Committee | 19 September 2017

Research Briefing:

Petition number: [P-05-770](#)

Petition title: Reopen Crumlin Railway Station

Text of petition:

We call on the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to reopen Crumlin railway station. We believe Crumlin could be a significant public transport hub. Its key location would provide the main multi-modal interchange point between the enhanced Ebbw line rail services and the main mid-valley Regional Bus Rapid Transport route. The site for the station has good access to the main highway network, a substantial car park and space for buses. Long distance walking and cycling routes are accessible from the site. We note that Crumlin has a street with the poorest air pollution outside London and that improving public transport links is necessary to improve public health. We urge the Welsh Government to assess the case for reopening a railway station in Crumlin and to consider adding it to the next priority list of proposals for new stations in Wales.

Background

Rail infrastructure and services

Rail infrastructure investment is not devolved and the main statutory powers and duties rest with the Secretary of State for Transport. However, the Welsh Government has powers under the *Railways Act 2005* ('the 2005 Act') to invest in rail infrastructure, including stations.

Rail franchising is not currently devolved. However, the Welsh Government is responsible for the day to day management of the Wales and Borders franchise, including the funding of services within Wales ("Wales only services"), and those which start or finish in Wales ("Welsh services").

As well as infrastructure investment, the 2005 Act empowers the Welsh Government to invest in rail service enhancements. This could include any costs associated with a scheduled stop at Crumlin station. However, it is worth noting that inclusion of additional scheduled stops on a rail service has a knock-on impact on the timetable and journey times.

The Welsh and UK Governments are currently negotiating devolution of executive powers to procure the next Welsh rail franchise from 2018. Powers are expected to be devolved in Autumn 2017 and the Welsh Government has begun its [procurement of the next Wales and Borders franchise](#).

Crumlin station

Crumlin is located on the Ebbw Valley Railway line between Ebbw Vale Town Station and Cardiff Central. Arriva Trains Wales currently operates an hourly service on this line. The former Crumlin Low Level station closed in the 1960s.

Capita Symonds carried out a [Welsh Transport Appraisal Guidance](#) (WelTAG) assessment of the *Ebbw Valley Railway, Future Phases* for the now disbanded South East Wales Transport Alliance (SEWTA) in 2010. The assessment considered new stations at Cwm, Crumlin, Abertillery, Pye Corner and Newport West Central. Capita Symonds concluded that a new station at Crumlin had a moderate benefit cost ratio and, together with a new station at Pye Corner and additional services, performed well in the overall WelTAG appraisal and should be progressed.

On increasing the reach of the rail network, a Jacobs [report on the SEWTA Rail Strategy](#), published in 2013, stated:

There are few quick wins in terms of new stations that could be built on existing lines in the SEWTA area. Options are Pye Corner and / or Crumlin and Ebbw Vale Town on the Ebbw Vale Line.

Caerphilly County Borough Council's [Adopted Local Development Plan](#) provides for land to be safeguarded for the provision of a new station at Crumlin and says "the establishment of this station would benefit the main employment site at Oakdale".

Cardiff City Deal and Metro

The [Cardiff Capital Region Transport Authority](#) (CCRTA) has been established under the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal to co-ordinate transport planning and investment within the City Deal region (inclusive of Crumlin). CCRTA has "set about developing a Strategic Regional Transport Plan" and will "review and prioritise existing draft plans in the light of City Deal". It is also "actively engaging with Welsh Government and Transport for Wales on co-designing the South East Wales Metro schemes".

The Metro is the Welsh Government's planned integrated public transport network for the South Wales Valleys and Cardiff. The Welsh Government says it is a "long term programme" which "is being developed so that it can be incrementally extended". The Welsh

Government's most recent [Metro brochure](#) says Metro Phase 2 (2017–23) “will focus on modernising the core Valley Lines and the wider South Wales rail network”. While the Ebbw Vale line is not included among the Core Valleys Lines the brochure says that, if not delivered during Phase 2, “a range of additional heavy rail stations [including Crumlin] can also be considered”.

Welsh Government action

New stations

The Welsh Government's [National Transport Finance Plan](#) (NTFP) commits to “develop assessment criteria and, using those criteria, a prioritised list of new station proposals for further consideration [in relation to securing funding from the rail industry]”. Crumlin is listed in the NTFP as a station that will be assessed as part of this process (NTFP Reference RI10). Under delivery of Metro Phase 2, Crumlin station is included in a list of proposed infrastructure enhancements which will be subject to “feasibility studies, development of business case and delivery of [a] recommended solution/option” between 2017 and 2020 (NTFP Reference CCRM10f).

The Cabinet Secretary for Economy and Infrastructure [wrote to all Assembly Members on 26 April 2017](#) (PDF 229KB) to provide an update on:

- the Welsh Government's three-stage approach for prioritising proposals for new railway stations in Wales; and
- A prioritised list of stations which will be taken forward for further assessment under stages 2 and 3.

Crumlin station was not included on the Cabinet Secretary's prioritised station list.

Following a question to the First Minister on the [process for assessing proposals for new railway stations](#) on 16 May 2017, the Cabinet Secretary wrote to all Assembly Members [with a further update](#) on the 6 June 2017 which stated:

The regional stations identified for further [stage 2] assessment were the ones that scored the highest across all the [WelTAG and Well-being] criteria tested.

In his letter to the Chair regarding this petition, the Cabinet Secretary stated that in lieu of responsibility for funding for rail infrastructure, the Welsh Government is using its powers to “facilitate the development of rail stations” in order to increase the “ability of station proposals to be in a position to benefit from [UK Government] funding calls”. On Crumlin Station, he stated:

Whilst working on Stage 3 we will also assess the next batch of stations on the Stage 1 list. We anticipate commencing this work in early 2018. Our initial assessment is that Crumlin Station scored well against the transport case criteria. As the assessment process is an on-going and iterative one, Crumlin will eventually be assessed along with other stations on our list.

National Assembly for Wales action

Following a response from the Cabinet Secretary for Economy and Infrastructure to a question on investment in the rail network in [Plenary on the 21 June 2017](#), Steffan Lewis stated:

The Cabinet Secretary, as mentioned previously, has published his priority list for new stations to be constructed, and I was surprised that Crymlyn was not among those priority stations, given the key location that it provides for a multimodal interchange point and its potential as a cycle and long-distance walking hub as well—in the area, the Cabinet Secretary will be aware, in which the street with the poorest air pollution outside of London anywhere in the UK is also located.

I understand that his resources are finite and there are many competing factors, but perhaps the current criteria for deciding priority stations aren't as all-encompassing as they could be.

Responding to a statement on historic environment policy and legislation in [Plenary on 4 July 2017](#), Rhianon Passmore stated that she would like to see “the railway station reintroduced in Crumlin in order to open up our Valleys communities”. Discussing the Ebbw Vale Town station and associated line extension in [Plenary on the 5 July 2017](#), Rhianon Passmore stated:

The Ebbw Vale Town station demonstrates how the line can be expanded as part of a strategic, holistic and multimodal transport interface [...].

I'm very much of the opinion that, one day, Crumlin should once again have a railway station on the line.

Every effort is made to ensure that the information contained in this briefing is correct at the time of publication. Readers should be aware that these briefings are not necessarily updated or otherwise amended to reflect subsequent changes.