

1. Integrated Transport Structure 1999

In 1999, the then Parliamentary Under Secretary at the Welsh Office, Mr (now Lord) Peter Hain invited myself and others to prepare a report 'The Transport Legacy in Wales' (see Appendix).

Peter Hain also asked me to prepare a separate paper (published by the Welsh Office) on 'The short term possibilities and long term vision' which considered, inter alia, the structure and functions of a national transportation authority and the role of local authorities. This extract is included as an appendix to this submission. Although it was written 20 years ago it remains my view.

2. Governance, structure and funding of Transport for Wales (TfW)

2.1 The Welsh Government sought to indicate in 2014 that the railways in Wales were to be seen as under government control when it determined to create one brand (TfW) for the governance authority and the railway operational business.

Network Rail, now within the public sector at the Department for Transport, was established when operational weaknesses were found in Railtrack plc. Subsequently when it was determined that as the funding of Network Rail borrowing came from DfT, Welsh Government ;and the Scottish Government, it could not be considered a private sector company.

2.2 Structure – TfW / TfW Rail

These have two quite different roles:

- TfW is described in the bid documents as 'the Authority'. Headed by Mr James Price, it is the 'agency' of the Welsh Government which implements the latter's policy in relation to railways in Wales (within the Wales and Borders franchise). This satisfies the Government's promotion of a 'not for dividend company' operating the railway.
- TfW Rail is in effect KeolisAmey trading as TfW Rail. It is the Train Operating Company (TOC) responsible for mobilising the new network provision – procuring and operating the trains, creating timetables (within guidelines

set down by TfW), operating stations and managing the track either directly (Core Valley Lines) or through Network Rail. This satisfies the Railways Act requirement for a private sector company (despite all bidders being in some way part of a state owned railway elsewhere) to be the train operating company.

The ability of both to work together is the key to success in the new franchise. This current structure should stay in place and its viability tested certainly over the challenging period to 2025.

2.3 The integrated structure under one brand has benefits in terms of the travelling public's perception of government providing the railway service.

The only concerns will arise if:

- (a) There are major disruptions to the passenger railway plan. The 'blame culture' is not to be encouraged but should for example the new trains or overhead wiring not be delivered on time/on budget (as has been seen with the GWML), whose responsibility it is to put it right. In addition, whose financial risk will it be if the target price of Valley Lines electrification is exceeded – TfW (the Authority) or TfW (KeolisAmey) in the Operational Development Partnership. It becomes difficult for government then to explain the difference.
- (b) There are operational issues such as arose in autumn 2018. The Committee during its recent inquiry saw differing views of TfW and Arriva Trains Wales on, for example, fleet transfer conditions. The differing perceptions of two quite separate organisations makes such issues easier to understand.

However overall the single brand is the better option when both parts work alongside Network Rail. The near proximity of their offices/operational control facilities is also important.

2.4 Management Team / Skills

A high quality management team is now being built up at both TfW and TfW Rail. Advice given in 2013 (by Professor Stuart Cole) indicated a need for a high-level TfW permanent team from that date and experienced support staff. This team would have covered the rail franchising processes (to TOCs), interface with Network Rail and procurement options for new or cascaded rolling stock. These would have had high quality skills to assess the bidders' plans (assisted by some of the high quality consultants employed) and formed the permanent team to take forward this large enterprise.

The management team for TfW Rail (in effect Keolis) could not have been fully created until the winning bid was determined.

2.5 Funding

At present TfW can only be funded by Welsh Government (or UK Government through WG) in both capital account (investment) and revenue account (subsidy).

There is a longer term possibility of a precept through local authority Council Tax as police authorities and community councils currently enjoy. The popularity of this may be varied and one might recall a form of this argument when the Greater London Council attempted to use a precept to fund its cheap fares (Fares Fair) policy in particular on the London Underground which did not serve the London Borough of Bromley who took legal action which delayed introducing the fares policy.

2.6 Brand Placing /Style

The big red **T** has potential to be the ultimate strong Welsh brand. The WG has impressed the need to highlight Wales in all marketing and promotion.

Its attached words **TRAFNIDIAETH CYMRU** (TrC) and **TRANSPORT FOR WALES** (TfW) says what it set out to do – provide public (at least for the present) transport for Wales. However following discussion with marketing professionals and product managers a view was put where long term brand impact has been compromised by ‘too early’ introduction. Several comments emerged:

- In appearance it has not a sufficiently bold **RED**
- Red and white would be appropriate for Wales; but the use of black is a mystery. It is funereal - in particular the male staff ties (neckwear) where the red T is replaced by a white motif
- There is inconsistency in background colours for the TrC / TfW signage – usually white; occasionally black or even Arriva (ATW) turquoise
- The point size of the logo and associated words is small compared with the previous ATW point size. There should be no reluctance in making clear this is a Welsh train company even when operating in England
- The **TrawsCymru** logo and bus paintwork style shows the colours of Wales; the major places served; the brand **TrawsCymru** is ‘in your face (a marketing term); and it is what it says on the tin – service across Wales
- An interim name (e.g. Rheilffordd Cymru & Gororau (Wales & Borders Railway) might have been used until the new product was in place. It was likened to Marks & Spencer taking over a Poundland store (no offence meant to either company) and installing its M&S brand before completely refurbishing and restocking the store. It was suggested that there is a parallel here and that TrC / TfW may have damaged its otherwise potentially strong image unnecessarily.

3. Developing governance structure and funding – and good practice examples

3.1 The future of bus integration in Wales is the current subject of a consultation paper “Improving Public Transport”. Welsh Government is examining proposals, one of which is particularly relevant to this inquiry,

The consultation paper suggests establishing a Joint Transport Authority (JTA) (as provided for in the Transport (Wales) Act 2006). As the adviser to both the House of Commons Welsh Affairs Committee and in joint session the National Assembly for Wales scrutiny committee on the Bill, this proposal raises a serious concern.

3.2 The purpose of the enabling legislation was to allow the creation of a single national JTA for Wales covering the railways and what is now the *TrawsCymru* bus network. Separate local JTAs on a regional basis involving the local authorities (not dissimilar to the regional transport consortia - SWWITCH, Sewta, Taith, TraC). There is already in existence a national JTA in the form of TfW. Creating two separate national structures one for bus and one for rail would not provide for an integrated network. A bus JTA for Wales is unwise therefore on two counts:

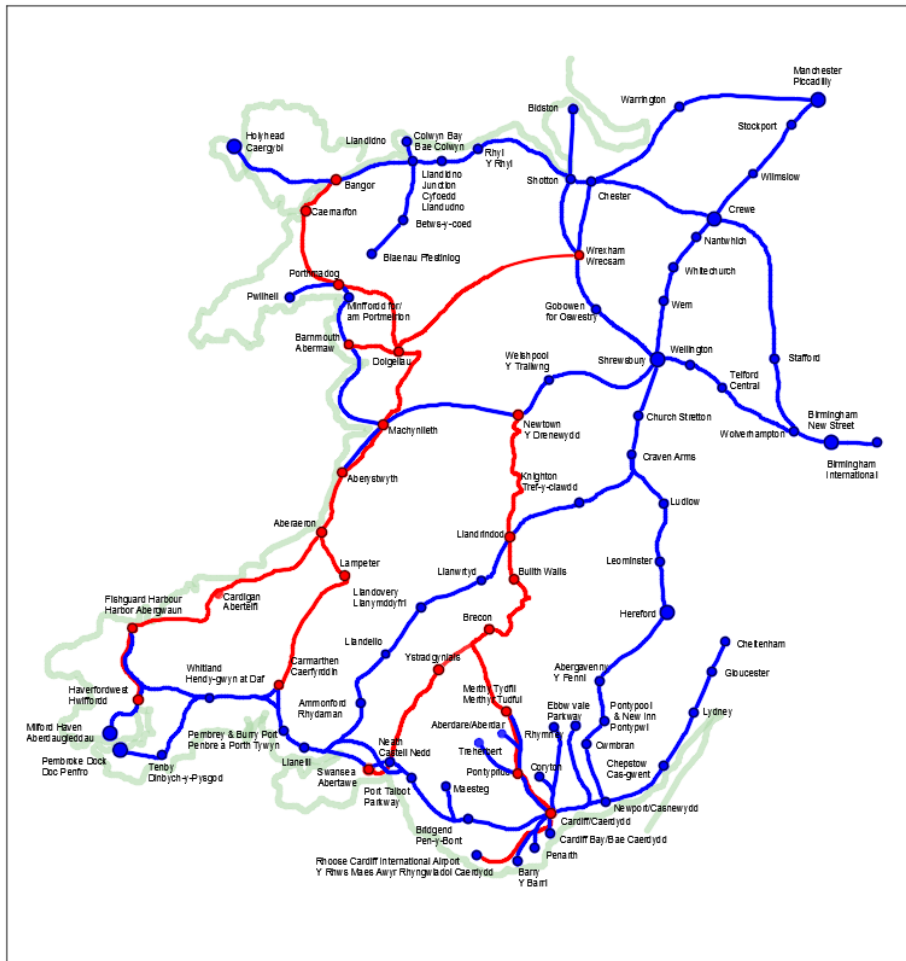
- (a) buses are local operations and should in the main be considered locally. Regional JTAs within the same national structure is therefore preferable.
- (b) it would be more difficult to integrate national and local/regional rail and bus services.

3.3 Consequently my conclusion is to retain TfW as the national JTA and create local JTAs based on similar areas to the public transport consortia. Further argument on this issue and the basis of the JTA clause in the Transport (Wales) Act 2006 can be seen in Appendix 1.

Fig 2 below defines the future role of TfW and other transport related organisations.

[The discussion on franchising buses or using Quality Contract Schemes is a matter for discussion elsewhere]

Fig 1 Map of current rail franchise and TrawsCymru services



TrawsCymru routes // Wales & Borders rail franchise routes (TfW)

4. Good practice – Netherlands

The Netherlands has taken national public transport integration and devolution and to some extent made them compatible.

The OV Chipkaart is the national travel card and it can be used on trams, buses and trains anywhere in the Netherlands.

The OV Chipkaart is based on mileage travelled – a reasonable base. But the fare per mile varies between travel modes and also between the companies. Trams in Amsterdam, Delft, Rotterdam or Utrecht (the primary cities of the Randstad) are operated by the municipally owned companies as before but all have different

fares per mile. While that might not seem odd as they are in different cities, the three different bus companies operating in, for example, Amsterdam all charge different mileage rates to one another and to the tram operator. But all accept the OV Chipkaart as required in their franchise contracts with the transport authority (Netherlands Government or Provincie Governments).

Nederlandse Spoorwagen (NS) (the equivalent of what was British Railways) is the state – owned primary railway operator with a mileage and peak / off peak period based fare structure. The fares are lower than those in Wales (or the UK) and further discounts for different travel patterns are provided through the OV Chipkaart. All of this sounds fine with one card for the whole national network. But to achieve the lowest travel cost with often two or three cards offering different discounts and a card required for each person including children has caused some irritation with the pricing structure amongst passengers.

There are some rail operators with familiar names (Arriva, Veolia, Connexion) operating limited local train services in rural areas and is the source of another passenger annoyance. To use the OV Chipkaart the passenger has to check onto and off the vehicle. On NS journeys may be made between different connecting train services by this process. On using services operated by more than one train operator there are two separate checking points, so for example interchanging between NS and Veolia trains the passenger has to process the OV Chipkaart possibly incurring a higher fare.

This has been the consequence of devolving the railway franchising process to the Provincie level without specifying a revenue allocation formulae between the railway operators – to the inconvenience of the traveller.

So what are the lessons to be learned:-

- The OV Chipkaart is a smart idea.
- It has stored value (as the London Oyster card) and based on the same principle as the GoCymru card which the Government should introduce into the current rail franchise.
- Maintain a national franchise ticketing system for Wales.

5 Future TfW role / additional responsibilities / integrated with Welsh Government and regional JTAs

5.1 TfW cannot be a policy making body unless it has a democratic body overseeing it. The current ‘division of labour’ where Welsh Government delivers policy and TfW delivers the outputs should remain at least until 2025 when the new railway network, trains and survives will be settled in.

The role of the Economy, infrastructure and Skills Committee in respect of TfW should also be considered.

5.2 There is an unenviable challenge facing Transport for Wales (TfW), the arms - length body set up by the Government to plan and implement the new Wales & Borders rail franchise. But it was surely also set up to integrate the new improved rail services with national (TrawsCymru) and local bus services.

A national public transport strategy has been elusive without regional transport authorities fully supporting integrated bus and rail operations so making travel easy for passengers. Network planning has local authorities providing the framework for bus services and the Welsh Government the new rail franchise and TrawsCymru.

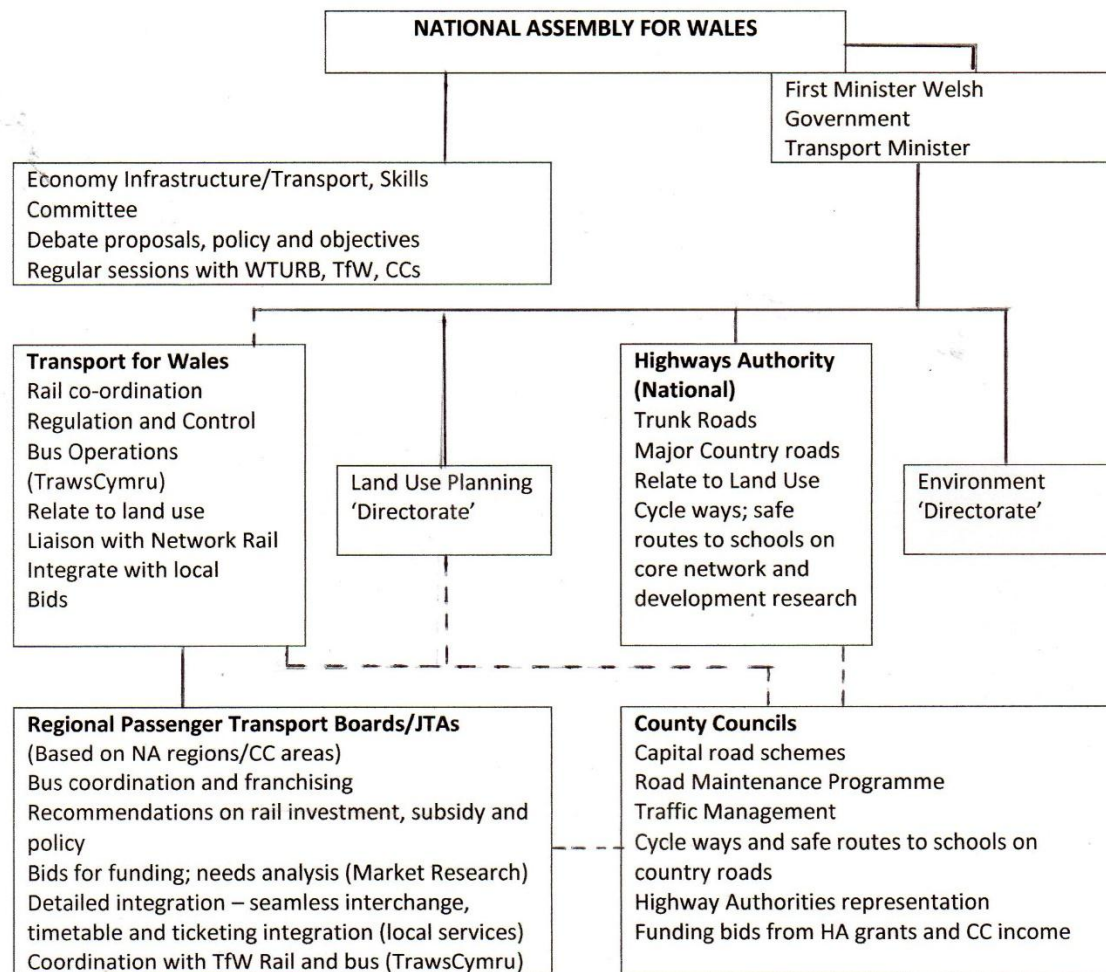
This can be achieved through high quality -

- (a) Information** comprehensively available on easy to read phone apps / hard copy shows the links between bus and train services. The current provision real time timetables at railway stations should be replicated at key bus hubs and stations linked to buses through a Wales national GPS system (as is operated by National Express).
- (b) Interchange** improvements which make journeys easier through joint and inter-journey ticketing – currently a barrier to their attractiveness compared with the private car.
- (c) Investment** in infrastructure to provide clean, comfortable, safe and fully accessible (by foot and bicycle) means to improve the customer experience. A string of uncared for bus shelters does not constitute a bus station. Swansea's high quality city bus station is the exemplar in Wales. It was achieved through the combined resources of national and local government to achieve the aspirations of the traveller.

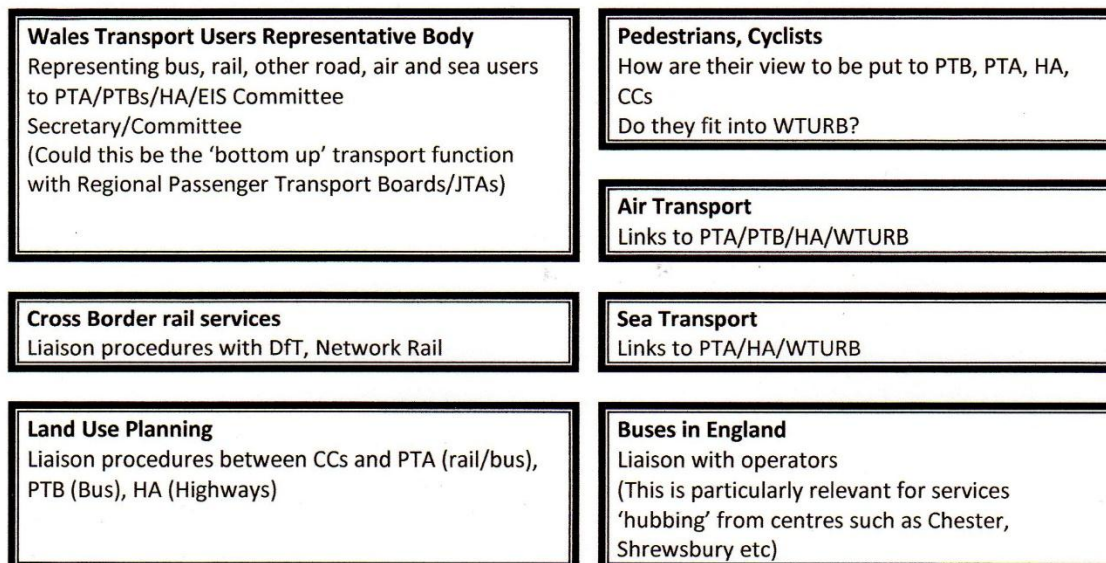
Strategic bus and rail services have to interconnect across Wales and across our border into England; but the bus plans must also be locally centred. We have to decide what services we want and for whom. They have to be affordable and involve a combined approach by TfW, Welsh Government and local authorities.

While TfW has a major rail task, it appears only recently to have considered integrating bus operations. But the inter-connection should have been a requirement in the tender document - hopefully to be issued to the four bidders later this month and there is an opportunity for TfW to ensure integration of bus services with the new Wales and Borders rail franchise creating an improved traveller experience.

Fig 2: The future role of TFW



WHERE DO THESE PLAYERS FIT?

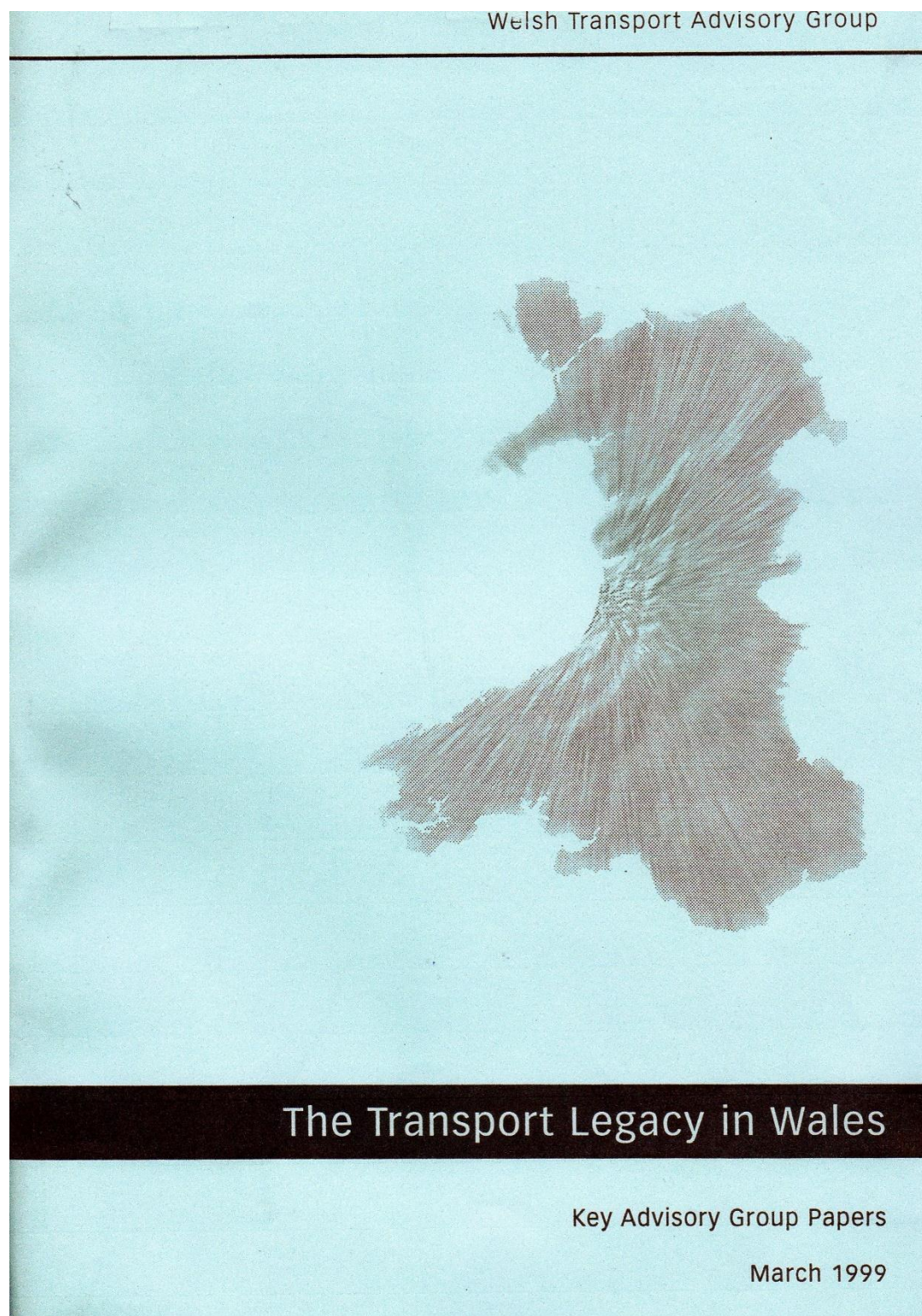


Note: The Land Use and Environmental functions would have a parallel role to TFW/HA

APPENDIX 1

The Transport Legacy in Wales Key Advisory Group Papers, Welsh Transport Advisory Group, Welsh Office, March 1999

WTAG Chair Mr Peter Hain MP, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State, Welsh Office



Y SWYDDFA GYMREIG

Tŷ GWYDIR

WHITEHALL LLUNDAIN SW1A 2ER

Ffôn: 0171-270 3000 (Switsfwrdd)
0171-270 (Llinell Union)

Ffacs: 0171-270 0568

Oddi wrth yr Is-Ysgrifennydd Seneddol



Peter Hain MP

WELSH OFFICE

GWYDYR HOUSE

WHITEHALL LONDON SW1A 2ER

Tel: 0171-270 3000 (Switchboard)
0171-270 (Direct Line)

Fax: 0171-270 0568

From The Parliamentary Under-Secretary

Ref: CT/99/11627

31 March 1999

Dear Stuart,

WELSH TRANSPORT ADVISORY GROUP

I am writing to thank you for your contribution to the Welsh Transport Advisory Group. I was bitterly disappointed to have to miss the Group's last meeting and the opportunity to thank you personally for all the hard work you have put in. I am particularly grateful for the 'vision' paper which you prepared for the Group.

The past eighteen months or so have of course seen a radical overhaul of transport policy, and I have found the Group's advice invaluable during this time. Looking forward, I am delighted that the Group feels that the Government's integrated transport policy will provide the National Assembly with a solid foundation on which to build. Also the Group's final report will give the Assembly an excellent start in tackling the rather daunting transport agenda in Wales.

Once again thank you for your valuable contribution to the work of the Group and for helping to shape transport policy in Wales.

Professor Stuart Cole
Transport Research and Consulting
University of North London
Stapleton House
277 - 281 Holloway Road
LONDON N7 8HN

Welsh Transport Advisory Group

Key Advisory Group papers

1. The Welsh Transport Advisory Group has published its final report to the National Assembly for Wales, setting out the transport legacy in Wales.

2. Annex 3 of the report is a summary of the key papers considered by the Group. This volume, which is intended to complement the final report, reproduces those papers in full.

3. The papers are as follows:

- Accessibility Working Group: Final Report
- Gender Issues Sub-Group: Final Report
- Land Use Planning Working Group: Final Report
- Safe Routes to School Working Group: Final Report
- Freight Working Group: Final Report
- Transport-related sustainability issues in Wales: Paper by Mr Neil Crumpton and Mr Simon Halfacree
- An integrated transport policy for Wales - The short-term possibilities and the long-term vision: Paper by Professor Stuart Cole

4. The various Working and Sub-Groups were chaired as follows:

- | | |
|-------------------------|-------------------|
| • Accessibility | Mr Denys Morgan |
| • Gender Issues | Cllr Sue Essex |
| • Land Use Planning | Mr Richard Jarvis |
| • Safe Routes to School | Ms Carol Freeman |
| • Freight | Mr Frank Cook |

**An integrated transport policy for
Wales - The short-term possibilities
and the long-term vision:
Paper by Professor Stuart Cole**

6.5 Proposed structure

- This takes into account the National Assembly for Wales Consultation Paper in so far as it relates to transport. This in particular concerns:-

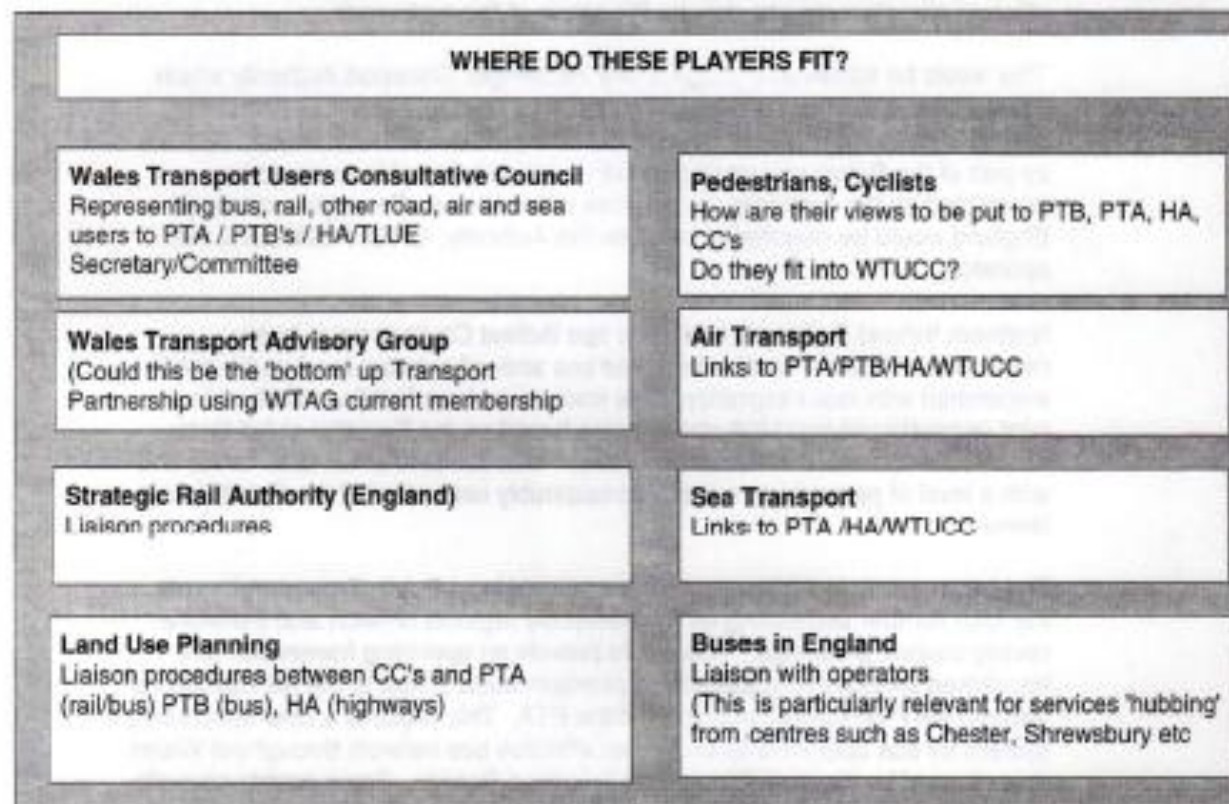
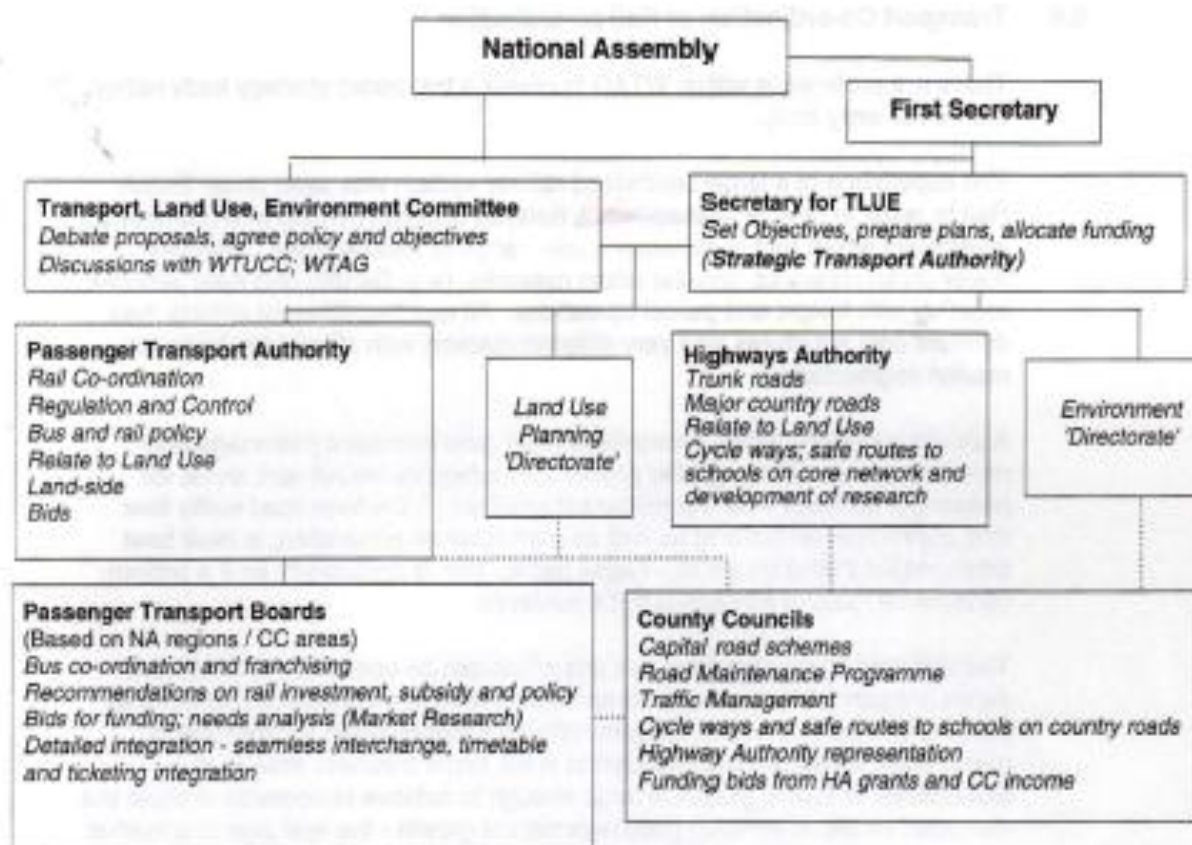
1. the role of the Integrated Transport Policy Committee * (p 12)
2. the role of the Assembly Secretary for Integrated Transport
3. the decision making process (p 20)
4. the regional committees (p 36).

* This Committee might be called the Transport Land Use and Environment Committee as referred to in this Briefing Paper (Version 6).

- Attached is a proposed management structure where most players have been allocated a position. However discussion is needed on the role and relationships of other players indicated (see overleaf).
- The chart overleaf identifies key responsibilities. There may be others and this should also be included in the discussion.
- The balance of "bottom up" to "top down" decision making rests with the relative roles of the Assembly, the TLUE Secretary, the PTA, the county councils and the PTB's. Enhancing a bottom up approach would be the creation of a Public Transport Partnership (possibly based on the WTAG range of membership; and county council/National Assembly membership on the Wales PTA, the Highways Authority and the PTB's).
- The WTAG has produced several papers on this issue generally in favour of a Strategic Transport Authority (not limited to passenger transport). The exact role of some of the levels of organisation has also been discussed (Bigwood 1998) and options were considered by the Accessibility Working Group (1998).

Very reasonable concerns have also been raised about the degree of bureaucracy that apparently similar sets of bodies have created (CPT 1998) and the vested interests in maintaining the structure once it was set up. The proposal here sets out to minimise bureaucracy and maximise co-ordination and consultation *where that would not otherwise exist* while achieving inclusively for all parties: users, operators and government. No new levels of government or decision-making are created.

The public Transport Boards are groupings of county councils with National Assembly and operator representatives; the PTA/STA are a part of the Assembly and the Secretary for Transport (Land Use and Environment). These two levels currently exist or will exist under the National Assembly.



Note: The Land Use and Environmental functions would have a parallel role to the PTA/HA

6.6 Transport Co-ordination or Rail co-ordination

There is a preference within WTAG to create a **transport** strategy body rather than a **rail only** body.

The experience of a large centralised railway system was seen under British Rail to result in remote management, delayed decision making and priorities for investment which had to consider a wide range of service types - inter city, major urban networks, smaller urban networks, (e.g. Cardiff) and rural services together with freight and parcel operations. All required different criteria, had different cost structures and very different markets with different policies for market segmentation.

A dynamic railway, which grows the market (and increases patronage and revenue) achieved through the provision of adequate investment levels for passenger services which consider externalities (in the form road traffic flow and environmental factors) as well as pure revenue generation, is itself best achieved for Wales on an all - Wales basis. This is particularly so if a bottom-up decision making process is to be achieved.

The structure suggested here is a unit which can be operationally achieved; defends against the past and current tendency to see Wales train services as peripheral ends to the network with reduced services when frequencies or rolling stock shortages are threatened in the major business area (e.g. Manchester or Birmingham); is large enough to achieve economies of scale but managed locally to achieve maximum market growth - the real sign of a market oriented dynamic railway whose primary concern is service quality and an efficient attractive railway serving the needs of the customers.

This would be achieved through a new Passenger Transport Authority which could assume the operational and financial functions of The Rail Regulator (ORR) and the Franchising Director (OPRAF). Rail would continue to operate as part of the British mainland network, but the six franchises would be contracted by the Authority, for services within Wales. Through services to England would be negotiated between the Authority, OPRAF/SRA, and the operators.

Northern Ireland Railways, Ulsterbus and Belfast Citylines have been developed to operate as an integrated bus and rail network (and under public ownership) with real integration. The main route from Dublin to Belfast has joint ownership of new high speed trains based on the Eurostar at full fares about 50% of current Great Britain Saver Fares (or 25% of full G.B. fares) and with a level of percentage subsidy considerably below that of the Great Britain Network.

The bus network in Wales would have several local Public Transport Boards, the final number depending on the Assembly regional division and therefore county council groupings. This would provide an operating framework with franchised services on a subsidy or premium basis linked to the rail operations through the PTB's position as part of the PTA. This requires a new franchising system for bus operators to ensure an effective bus network throughout Wales co-ordinated by the local Passenger Transport Boards. Some county councils

have striven to operate such strategies but effective operation is prevented by competition on profitable routes which reduces the profitability of these routes and discourages investment. There is clear evidence in the regional councils of France, the Netherlands bus and rail network and the Northern Ireland position that such frameworks can work effectively.

6.7 Links to the SRA

This assumes the SRA is set up and that responsibilities are to be transferred to the National Assembly. The rationale for and links in relation to the Wales PTA are set out below.

(1) Rationale

This is based on six elements:-

- 1) the National Assembly cannot pursue an integrated transport policy without responsibility for railways; the views of the WTAG clearly suggest such a responsibility is required,
- 2) a Strategic Rail Authority alone cannot fulfill the objectives of other modes' involvement in seamless interchange and integrated timetables/ticketing - the passengers' primary perception of a sustainable integrated transport policy,
- 3) the need for interface with the devolved administration suggested by the CIT (see above), the UK's leading transport professional institute,
- 4) the opportunity in two countries (Wales and Scotland) of more manageable geographical size than England to create effective powerful local integrated transport strategies,
- 5) the current position for letting franchises involved the PTE's "acting jointly with the Franchising Director" and where the PTA's received special grant funding from DETR (ETRC 1998f). This suggests that an interface relationship between two funding authorities works well and therefore a Wales PTA and England SRA/OPRAF could also work together on cross border services,
- 6) achievement of a 'bottom up' decision-making process where users' and operators' views and needs are fully taken into account. DETR capital grants would also be transferred to the block grant.

(2) Cross border links

No significant problems arise in (5) above in the relationship between OPRAF and the PTA's. In their evidence to the HOC (ETRC 1998f) the DETR Ministers and officials were satisfied with the workings of these joint activities. Discussion with Centro (West Midlands PTE) indicates a good working relationship with OPRAF (Cole 1997).

7. VISION STATEMENT

7.1 European Union context

The localising of transport policy on a regional basis can also bring benefits and these were considered in a study of the possibilities for a radical organisational and policy change in Wales.

The public transport problems of Cymru/Wales are in microcosm those of many other countries in the European Union. The congestion of urban areas requires totally different solutions to the mobility issues in rural Wales; much of Wales is geographically peripheral to the road and rail network in England, and of the European Union, and a high quality transport network will help redress that position. Most of the deregulation and privatisation policies of recent years have done little for passengers and such policies can only be effective within a planning framework which links the commercial market and the subsidised networks and which provides investment in infrastructure and traffic controls on a social cost benefit basis.

The transport policy needs of Wales involve a mix of control and finance on one side and operations on the other. The public transport facilities in the French regions, Paris, Grenoble (a city of similar size to Caerdydd/Cardiff), rural Netherlands, Amsterdam or Portland (Oregon), have many similarities. Indeed if the funding levels of French regions were combined with the efficiency (CPT 1998) of the British railway network the service levels in Wales would be substantially higher. All have a planning authority, and most have infrastructure and priority policies for public transport, involving public investment and subsidised fares. The basis of a strategic planning authority exists in the Welsh Office and through the National Assembly the opportunity needs to be taken to create an integrated transport policy where road investment, public transport investment, service contract payments, land use and environmental issues can be considered together.

7.2 Investment policy - road v rail

The investment criteria used to evaluate road construction schemes are founded on the social benefits to be derived from the road. This form of cost benefit analysis compares the capital cost of a scheme with resources cost savings to the community in terms of the savings in journey time, vehicle operating costs, and accident costs.

Pre-privatisation public transport however had strict financial targets set by the Government, by county councils (who were themselves faced with Government financial constraints), and by the operator boards now in the case of private companies, by bankers and shareholders returns are based solely on financial appraisal methods with an allowance made for social benefits, although there is a mobility element implied in the contractual payments from OPRAF or in direct infrastructure payments from DETR to Railtrack. These latter payments are of course subject to public sector expenditure constraints. Railtrack PLC has to

achieve a rate of return on investment schemes reflecting its need to achieve profitability in the private sector.

As a result of policies encouraging private investment in roads the new Severn Bridge is privately funded and no consideration was given to alternative rail operations such as improved train links between Cardiff and Bristol or London which could have occurred under an integrated transport policy, leading to possible resource cost savings. In contrast, an integrated transport policy would enable a wide range of transport options to be considered and an indication of such a policy move in the Welsh Office was contained in its report (WO 1993, WO 1994) on public transport and traffic flows in the A470 corridor into Cardiff. The decision on access links to Cardiff International Airport raises a similar decision making dichotomy.

In addition an extension of current cost benefits analysis techniques would be seen as encompassing a series of economic parameters (DBRW 1997) and environmental measures. The economic aspects would include for example relative peripherality and the development potential of industry and tourism to create further employment and would be included in the multi criteria analysis basis of evaluating funding.

7.3 Catalysts for change

Meeting the wide variety of passenger transport needs of Wales in an appropriate manner requires an alternative to the present deregulated market for buses and the separation of track and train services (in organisational terms) on the rail network.

The forecasts provided by the Welsh Office are not encouraging and see the rise in traffic flows and car usage in particular continue to rise at a rapid rate even in the lower forecast level. Until some fundamental and radical change is introduced the people of any wealthy western European country will continue to use their cars at an increased rate. But what are the catalysts that will bring about this change? The first involves the car user and a change in personal behaviour as the first stage in any attempt to reduce traffic flows. This inevitably involves a long-term process involving advertising techniques, possibly requiring petrol and car manufacturing companies to insert words opposing speed and pollution in all promotional material. However, a prerequisite of a switch from car to bus or rail transport would be the provision of a comprehensive and high-investment public transport network which would meet demand patterns, either directly or through an integrated network of bus, tram, heavy rail and private car (park and ride) operations. It is here that the second catalyst emerges. The National Assembly and the Government of Wales together with local authorities, would provide the funding for both roads and public transport. A key feature of such a strategy would be the establishment of a Wales Passenger Transport Authority/Awdurdod Cludiant Cyhoeddus Cymru.

7.4 A Wales Passenger Transport Authority (PTA)

In 1991 the House of Commons Select Committee on Welsh Affairs recommended (HOC 1985) the establishment of a Wales and the Marches railway based in Cardiff and of a committee to "examine the role of a Cardiff Passenger Transport Authority to determine funding and service quality in the Cardiff commuter areas, and to consider methods of using rail to reduce road congestion".

A Wales Passenger Transport Authority (with a Partnership if a more 'bottom up' decision making process using a WTAG type body was preferred,) would be the cornerstone of a structure. It would provide adequate finance (funded by National Assembly) and/or the private sector, which created a railway operation which was no longer peripheral to England, but integral to Wales and would assume the roles of OPRAF (and possibly Railtrack) within Wales and the Marches. It would finance track development (including new lines or freight line conversion), determine fares, timetables, types of rolling stock, and would either operate trains or contract out their running to private companies using existing legislative powers. It would liaise with Railtrack and the Strategic Rail Authority/English Region/PTA on service integration with railways in England, including Inter-City operations (the responsibility of the Strategic Rail Authority) and would still be part of the Great Britain network. A much enhanced role of the Rail Regulator and the Rail User Committee both with greater powers would provide the public and passenger interest protection required.

Locally, Passenger Transport Boards/Bwrdd Cludiant Cyhoeddus (PTB's) based on the National Assembly regions/county council groupings would be responsible for franchising all bus services both commercial and tendered, creating an integrated transport system. PTA tickets would be issued, and bus and train services would be linked. A model was seen in the pre local government reorganisation Bws Gwynedd which provides a microcosm of effective rural provision - with trains and express coach services providing backbone and bus services in towns and rural areas providing the local services and feeder services.

The PTBs would have representatives from local bus operators, local authorities and passengers and would make local decisions on services' bid for finance from, and put proposals for rail services to, the Wales PTA. This would further enhance a bottom up decision making process.

The new structure would ensure that information was fully available on all bus and train services in Wales. Local public transport needs would be met and the all-Wales body would bid for finance purely for bus and train operations. This would generate greater investment in track, and rolling stock (replacing 'pacer' units currently providing a low quality of comfort on some services between Cardiff and the south west of Wales and a return to 3-car sets in place of often overcrowded sets on inter urban and rural lines the introduction of 4-car sets on busy routes particularly following market growth). Decisions on whether Inter-City services would run more frequently to Bangor, Aberystwyth and Hwlfordd/Haverfordwest would also be made by the PTA.

The parallel for such a system exists in other member states of the European Union where high investment levels, with co-ordination policies of services, fares and infrastructure developments, may be found in major centres as well as in local areas. The Regional Councils of France have transport as a major policy issue with responsibility for local railway services (with SNCF) and for bus operations in the municipalities. In Sweden regional public transport bodies run local bus and rail services in a country with many rural mountain areas, a small population (8m) and a concentration of people in a small part of the total land area. The Netherlands have a national ticketing system for local public transport (the Nationale Strippenkaart) and a national railway service. The proposals for Wales, which equates in many ways to a French region or to a geographically smaller version of the Netherlands or Sweden, would be taken further to the point where control and finance, policy and service provision, though not necessarily all operations, are conducted by one national, and five associated local bodies.

The body would also operate in parallel to a Highways Authority with responsibility for roads, pavements and cycleways. This would enable the PTA to bid for funding from the Transport, Land Use and Environment Committee of the National Assembly from a similar standpoint to the Highways Authority. The PTA model suggested here could provide the link between infrastructure and operations which is lacking in the current rail policy for Wales and Great Britain (but not Northern Ireland). Similarly it offers the opportunity of achieving the objectives of bus deregulation, in the form of improved services, more information and reduced subsidy, through the facilitation of bus servicing franchising by the local PTB's under Wales' PTA budget.

The final version of these bodies requires discussion and many questions have to be answered:-

- How could a Strategic Transport Authority (a body within the Assembly) and a PTA, enhance road and rail links from the north to the south of Wales?
- Do we require an "SRA (Wales)" or statutory consultation and agreement between the SRA and the National Assembly?
- Do we require a WTUCC?
- Would a Wales PTA be more effective in pursuing Welsh public transport interests?
- Is there a failure in logic where there is a National Assembly 'responsible' for road and bus transport, but specifically not for rail passenger or freight?
- It is inconceivable that there will not be a SRA (Scotland) office and would consistency not provide the same for Wales?

- Would the new PTB's franchise all bus services and the PTA all rail services; or provide a facility for an interface between market demand based service provision and contracted services?
- Is Wales' peripherality in road and rail networks a disadvantage to economic growth?

The name Passenger Transport "Authority" conjures up recent historical events. While it is merely semantic, perhaps "Partnership" or "Co-ordinator" implies a more discussive approach and a genuine link between user and supplier. Staff however would need to be employed by a Passenger Transport Co-ordination Office (or Executive).

However while arguments continue on the extension of National Assembly responsibility in areas of current Welsh Office powers, the inclusion of Wales in a SRA without a specific Wales division would cause the transfer of rail powers to be a longer term option. A clearer picture in the proposed railways bill to establish the SRA would ease that path considerably.

7.5 Policy context

The Wales PTA should also be seen within a supportive fiscal framework using various fuel taxes; a land use planning policy integrated with transport infrastructure; changes in the decision making process inherent in the proposals outlined above; the setting of environmental targets promoting "greener" forms of transport; and landscape and countryside protection policy. Within this context a sustainable integrated transport policy for Wales could be developed in the Wales Transport Strategy (AWC 1995) and one which would receive local support reflected.

7.6 Conclusions for Wales

Changes arising from de-regulation and privatisation are not entirely irreversible or necessarily incompatible with the development of an integrated transport policy and the establishment of a Wales PTP. The political will now exists in Wales to make the necessary changes. But is London politics sufficiently interested to understand the advantages of restructuring the passenger transport network in Wales rather than create a large centralised Strategic Rail Authority? What is to be the role of the National in developing an integrated transport policy when Government of Wales Act, 1998, refers only to responsibilities towards buses and roads and possibly light rail, but not to main line railways.

And of considerable importance, how would the funding for different modal options be achieved through the National Assembly, the National Parliament in Scotland, the Greater London Authority and the regions of England. What levels of funding will be available and how will the evaluation and allocation of the funding be decided. The Government has recently stated its support for regional PTA's, and the European Union's Directorate General for Transport

has in several white papers been supportive of an integrated public transport policy. It might therefore be suggested that where better than in Wales, a country of manageable proportions, to establish a successful version of the concepts being discussed in Brussels, Caerdydd/Cardiff, and London?