

Nick Ramsay AM
 Chair – Enterprise and Business Committee
 National Assembly for Wales
 Cardiff Bay
 Cardiff
 CF99 1NA

5th Floor,
 5 Callaghan Square
 Cardiff
 CF10 5BT

Tel : 02920 929688
 Mob : 07515 62 1110
dylan.bowen@networkrail.co.uk

9th February 2011

Dear Nick,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Welsh Government's prioritised National Transport Plan (NTP) published on 7 December 2011.

Please find below Network Rail's response regarding the NTP's rail elements and other rail investment issues in Wales.

It should first be noted that funding of the railway infrastructure in Wales is not devolved to the Welsh Government. Funding and planning for the railway is currently undertaken on an England and Wales basis in five year periods, known as Control Periods. We are currently in Control Period 4 (2009 – 2014) and work is well advanced with the Department for Transport (DfT) and stakeholders such as the Welsh Government to plan for Control Period 5 (2014 - 2019).

Network Rail, alongside the Association of Train Operating Companies, the Rail Freight Operators' Association and the Railway Industries Association, published the Initial Industry Plan (IIP) in September. This document defines the projects that Network Rail suggests that governments (DfT for England and Wales; Transport Scotland for Scotland) consider for funding through the High Level Output Specification (HLOS) which will be published during the summer of 2012.

The publication of the IIP marked the first major step in the process that will inform decisions to be made by governments and the Office of Rail Regulation affecting the railways in Control Period 5.

Network Rail, train operators and industry suppliers believe continued investment in rail would deliver major benefits for the country and they set out options for investment which if adopted in full would:

- Stimulate economic growth by better linking Britain's' cities.
- Maintain high levels of reliability and safety, focussing on areas in particular need of improvement.



- Better meet passengers' needs in key areas such as journey information, comfort and accessibility to drive continued improvement in customer satisfaction.
- Reduce the industry's carbon emissions per passenger kilometre.

The Welsh Government has had detailed input into the Wales-based elements of the IIP process and has built a business case for the electrification of the Cardiff and Valleys network as well as a programme to deliver accessibility improvements to stations across Wales.

Outside of the regulatory planning process, the Welsh Government does have discretionary powers to fund infrastructure enhancement schemes.

The Welsh Government has a strong record of investment in this regard with particular successes in re-opening the Vale of Glamorgan and Ebbw Valley lines to passenger services.

This trend continues with a number of further schemes included in the prioritised NTP including significant projects at Gowerton, along the North – South Wales line and at locations on the Valley Lines network. These Welsh Government-funded enhancements will deliver better passenger services by increasing capacity, improving connectivity, reducing journey times and improving reliability.

Such investment in the railway can and does bring clear economic, environmental and social benefits to Wales.

Better passenger services have the potential to both improve the productivity of the economy and the development of urban areas by offering faster, more productive business travel as well as affordable mass transit connecting towns and cities for commuters and leisure travellers.

In rural Wales the railway performs a vital lifeline and improved services can help reduce rural isolation and strengthen communities by bringing vital health and education services closer and expanding other opportunities such as trips to leisure centres and shops.

Rail is also a more environmentally friendly mode of transport. The average carbon dioxide emissions for a passenger rail journey is about half that of an equivalent car journey and about one-quarter of an equivalent journey by air. Enhancement schemes, such as those included in the NTP, will encourage a modal shift to the railway from road and will help meet Welsh emissions targets in the transport sector.

One of the biggest issues facing the railway in Wales is meeting an increase in demand in future years. The Wales Route Utilisation Strategy (RUS), published at the end of 2008, estimated an

increase in demand of 31 per cent over the next 10 years. The RUS set out the strategy to meet the predicted increase in rail usage by 2019 and this included many of the schemes included in the prioritised NTP.

For example, the redoubling of the line between Wrexham and Chester on the North – South Wales line will help meet growing north-south passenger demand. Whilst the project to re-double the railway in the Gowerton area will provide more capacity between Swansea and West Wales to help meet future demand.

We have also unveiled plans for a £220m signalling renewal scheme, including a funding contribution from the Welsh Government, which will improve reliability and boost capacity in the Cardiff area unlocking the potential for more and longer trains to serve the Valley lines, bringing up to 600 more seats during rush hours. This work will include new platforms at Cardiff Central, Cardiff Queen Street, Barry, Tir-phil, Caerphilly and Pontypridd.

Network Rail is committed to working with funding partners to build a bigger and better railway and fully supports the need for continued investment to improve stations, connections, facilities and accessibility.

Network Rail therefore welcomes the Welsh Government's commitment to support rail expansion through the individual schemes in the NTP. We recognise that difficult funding decisions have had to be taken and we would hope that the Welsh Government continues to examine rail as a possible solution to any transport issues.

I hope you find this useful.

Yours sincerely,



Dylan Bowen
Public Affairs Manager