

## NAfW Enterprise and Business committee Scrutiny of the NTP prioritisation

### Questions and Answers

1. What are the key issues currently affecting transport in Wales and how far are they addressed by the change in priorities within the National Transport Plan?

The key issues which affect transport in Wales are:

- Providing good access to jobs, education and training to facilitate economic development
- Providing good access to health care, social and leisure activities to promote social inclusion and health and well being
- Facilitating more sustainable travel behaviour to protect and enhance the natural and built environment

These are universal across Wales although the potential solutions may differ according to specific circumstances and pressures in different parts of Wales.

The National Transport Plan prioritisation, has essentially been more of a “tidying up” exercise and an establishment of timescales for delivering some projects rather than a wholesale change of direction. There is a slight change of emphasis to projects which connect Wales East to West rather than North to South, which SWWITCH supports, but the overall impact of the changes made on key issues for transport in Wales will be negligible.

2. How far does the change in priorities within the National Transport plan address, and strike the appropriate balance between, the strategic priorities stated in the Wales Transport Strategy, namely:
  - a. reducing greenhouse gas emissions;
  - b. integrating local transport;
  - c. improving access between key settlements and sites;
  - d. enhancing international connectivity; and
  - e. addressing safety and security.

As stated in answer to Q1, the changes in priorities are not radical, many of them were addressing shortfalls in the original plan programme (tidying up duplications or grouping together very similar projects), the policy and objectives remain unchanged in essence. The Plan is probably the best balance that can be achieved in terms of the WTS strategic priorities. It includes a range of projects each of which address some (but not all as clearly there are conflicts between the priorities) of the strategic priorities, but in the context of the limited control that the Government has on transport choices made by individuals and organisations, and the financial constraints of the current economic climate, it is a reasonable attempt at balance. The shift from north-south links to east-west links does help to strengthen access between key settlements as well as international connectivity,

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particularly where it aligns with the TENs networks (which run east to west across north and south Wales)

3. The Minister has stated that the National Transport Plan has been prioritised to “tackle poverty, increase well-being and assist economic development”. How far does the change in priorities within the National Transport Plan contribute to achieving these objectives and are they consistent with those included in the Wales Transport Strategy?

As the changes are not significant, they cannot really be seen to “tackle poverty” etc. If tackling poverty is the main priority then the mix between transport capital and revenue expenditure needs to be re-balanced towards revenue. Large capital projects do improve access for people to jobs or health etc and certainly make it easier for businesses to access materials, labour and markets for example (although it also becomes easier to relocate production or tertiary activities away to other areas), but those who benefit most are those with access to private transport.

Providing revenue support to public transport or supporting small scale projects which improve walking and cycling access or improve road safety will enable the most deprived in society to become more active, economically, socially and physically. The median gross weekly pay for people using buses as their usual travel to work mode was less than two thirds of that for people using cars/vans in both 2008 & 2009 (& only just over 70% in 2010).

4. Are the priorities contained in the Minister’s statement the correct objectives for Welsh transport policy? And

Yes, albeit perhaps better phrased as assisting economic development by tackling poverty and increasing well-being”

5. How far does the prioritised plan meet the Welsh Government’s obligations in relation to sustainability and equality?

There are no significant changes (as stated previously the plan is not THAT different). It still includes a significant number of new/improved roads and support for the Intra Wales air service and it also includes progressive proposals on public transport enhancements, information, support for cycling and walking etc.