

Comments on the ETP Committee Consultation Report 'Policy Review of Public Transport' (From WNFBU)

Existing Organisational Structures

The benefits that some of the regional consortia are bringing to areas are accepted and welcome but this still remains a fragmented approach that confers benefits only within that area and with different priorities.

It is believed that for a truly integrated network of public transport services to be provided and for the vitally important issues such as land use planning to be considered properly and with equal weighting in the decision making, process, then a national structure is likely to offer in far greater benefits.

Alternative organisational structures

It should be said at the outset that the bus passenger sees little benefit from there being 22 Authorities dealing with transport related issues. This provides a fragmented approach to the prioritising of expenditure within LA budgets as well as of the commitment to public transport. It has resulted in too many absurdities and anomalies that the bus user has to suffer. Any move that seeks to provide a more uniform approach is to be welcomed. NFBU in Wales would wish to emphasise the point made in 5.10 such that the vital importance of link between land use planning and public transport must not under any circumstances be weakened and indeed must be made far stronger as already suggested. Such an important link should not rest on voluntary co-operation alone.

NFBU in Wales would welcome the unifying lead that could be taken by the National Assembly in the creation of any body such as a PTA/PTE. It believes that reduction in car usage must be made a cross cutting theme that runs through all decision making at national level and as such is far too important to be left to the varying priorities of 22 Authorities. Only by commitment, vision and leadership at the highest level can this theme become a reality. NFBU in Wales does not feel confident to offer a view on precisely what sort of structure might deliver the benefits needed but of those outlined, the Dutch model appears to be one that offers the greatest benefit. Neither does NFBU in Wales feel able to comment on financial costs of the various tests to be applied.

The option in 5.15 is seen as the one that is least likely to deliver benefits across Wales for bus passengers. It would retain the fragmented approach that currently prevails albeit with 'partnership agreements'

The option in 5.14 suggests that traffic congestion is the main *raison d'être* for a PTA/PTE in that area. Such an option is not favoured as it ignores the need for a unifying influence across Wales.

The option in 5.13 is seen as the most appropriate in terms of providing an All Wales influence but it would need to be regionalised to reflect the different needs and demands of the various (3) areas already identified above. Further, whilst the structural differences between the PTE/PTA model and the Dutch model are not entirely understood it is felt to be important that overall National control of land use planning and transport policy is built into any organisational structure.

Any such body must be user focussed and not unnecessarily bureaucratic.

It should be legally free to consider the establishment of trust based operating companies such that there is some relaxation of financial pressures brought about by the major plc operators whose operating costs are (of necessity to them) unrealistically high and probably unsustainable in the long term.

It should act as the transport planner and provider in such a way that those areas whose population cannot provide the commercial operators with a market that meets their needs are provided with attractive public transport.

It should be able to innovate and be creative.

It should be able to influence education authorities in decision making that impacts on traffic flows.

It must provide economies of scale when its costs are compared with those of 22 unitary authorities with similar responsibility. Such economies should be used to provide better services and not as savings on the public purse.

It should be the promoter of public transport and provider of information (Possibly through close links with PTI Cymru). Such information should to a minimum standard format. But one simple example of a unified approach being the standard yellow departure information and white arrival information for buses and trains at all Swiss railway stations

It should work in close liaison with the All Wales rail franchise holder.

It should be able to recognise and pursue the need for a package approach to public transport provision that includes the protection of fares and provision of infrastructure. It should not be simply the provider of socially necessary services. i.e. passengers should not have to pay more for an inferior service in order for public money to be saved as can happen at the present.

It should be able to play a role in the decriminalisation of car parking, preferably as a revenue source such that the revenue can be put back into the public purse for the benefit of public transport.

It should be able to share with the private sector the financial proceeds of increased patronage resulting from promotion and partnership.

It should work with NHS trusts, universities and other major generators of car mileage on ways of reducing that mileage in a targeted way.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Recommendations 11 -14.

Whilst comments have not specifically been invited in connection with this section, it is hoped that the following comments may be helpful.

NFBU in Wales fully supports the recognition of the importance of evaluation of policies and particularly welcomes the recognition of the importance of involving the passenger in such evaluation. Such evaluation must also be able to accurately identify modal shift effects of policies and not just employ a crude passenger number figure. This could easily disguise a modal shift away from public transport if overall journeys have increased.

There should also be cross cutting evaluation that measures for instances health benefits arising from improved air quality, economic benefits arising from better access to work and shopping. So journeys to work or hospital or college etc should be measured on a regular basis to assess the impact of policies set in place.

21/22 November Available Possible Merthyr Surgery

29 November Rhyl Surgery

30 November Available