

# On Track for the 21st Century

A Development Plan for the Railways of Wales  
and the Borders

*Tua'r Unfed Ganrif ar Ugain*

*Cynllun Datblygu Rheilffyrdd Cymru a'r  
Gororau*



Railfuture Wales  
2<sup>nd</sup> Edition  
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# 1 Executive summary/ *Crynodeb weithredol*

- .1 *Railfuture* / The Railway Development Society is a UK-wide independent voluntary organisation which campaigns for greater investment in, and use of, rail and acts as a consumer body for rail users. The Wales branches cover the whole of Wales and the Marches line running through the border counties.
- .2 We believe rail can, and must, play a much larger role in meeting Wales's transport needs than it has done in recent decades. Greater use of rail, for both passengers and freight, will contribute to the Government's aims of reducing traffic congestion and pollution. This will improve accessibility (and hence reduce social exclusion) to work, health and leisure facilities for those without access to a car at all times, and improve the environment. It is an essential component of sustainable development, which the National Assembly for Wales is statutorily required to promote.
- .3 For these benefits to be realised, significant modal shift from road to rail is essential, but a pre-requisite is that rail must offer an attractive service, in terms of frequency, reliability, comfort, security and price. Without this, car owners are unlikely to consider rail as a serious alternative to using the car for every journey.
- .4 In much of Wales, rail passenger services currently do not meet these criteria adequately. At a time of rising demand for transport and increasing road traffic congestion, some rail services continue to be deficient in one or more of these criteria, and hence do not reach their full potential in securing this modal shift.
- .5 In this second edition of the Plan, we welcome some positive developments which have occurred, or are imminent, since publication of the first edition in 2000, but we also identify some negative features (section 2). Proposals are presented to overcome the negative aspects and build on the positive ones, by specifying what needs to be done to achieve the aspirations at paragraph 3. It is important to think of the Wales and borders rail network in strategic, regional terms rather than as a series of unconnected local services, or merely as an extension of the English network. Given the somewhat fragmented state of the transport industry and of local government, the emphasis is on what could be done, rather than how it might be implemented. We believe that the difficulties inherent in these structures can be overcome if the will is there.
- .6 To enable rail to realise its potential, passenger trains should be introduced on some lines currently used only for freight. These include Ebbw Vale and Aber-tillery to Newport; Barry to Bridgend (Vale of Glamorgan line - scheduled to happen in 2005); the Swansea District line (Port Talbot - Morriston - Llanelli); and Aberdare to Hirwaun (a short extension of an existing service). New stations are proposed on these and on existing lines. Some rebuilding of abandoned railway routes is also suggested where there would be strategic benefits, including Bangor to Caernarfon (Section 6).
- .7 Service frequencies should provide for almost all routes to be served at least every two hours, with a majority of lines to have half-hourly or hourly trains (more frequently on parts of the Cardiff Valleys network). It is important that services run from 06.00 to 23.00 Mondays to Saturdays, with Sunday services not greatly different except where aimed at commuters or school children (in recognition of changed social habits on Sundays, and as already happens in other European

countries). 'Clock-face' timetabling should be universally adopted, to make it easier for passengers to understand the timetable and to facilitate timetable design where services integrate and inter-connect with each other (Section 4.1).

- .8 Proposals to realise the concept of the seamless journey include altering the regulatory regime for train - train connections and improving the physical arrangements for inter-modal connections (train - bus and train - ferry). A range of ticketing initiatives, including multi-modal travelcards, is envisaged to boost the use of public transport (Section 4.2).
- .9 Facilities at stations and on the trains need to meet certain standards to make rail travel a pleasant, secure and convenient experience. Whilst improvements have been made in the availability of real time train running information at stations, a large gap remains to be bridged in terms of making potential passengers aware of public transport timetables, facilities and fares. Proposals are made for addressing this information deficit (Sections 4.3 - 4.5).
- .10 The benefits of increasing rail freight's market share are widely recognised. Some gains have been made in recent years, but potential exists for much more. Provision of a series of mini terminals at appropriate locations, review of the incentive regime and of planning considerations in siting new industrial and retail developments are among the proposals aimed at achieving greater modal shift (Section 5).
- .11 The political and administrative arrangements in Wales changed following the establishment of the National Assembly. The latter body appears to be well placed to take the strategic, regional view of the rail network alluded to in paragraph 5, but hitherto its ability to act has been limited by its lack of control or powers over rail services (in contrast to most other public services). We therefore welcome the announcement in the government's latest White Paper (July 2004) that additional powers are to be devolved to the Assembly in respect of the Wales and Borders franchise. That in itself may not be sufficient and to achieve a truly integrated transport system - we advocate a Passenger Transport Authority (PTA) approach, possibly with the existing local authority consortia acting as divisions of an all-Wales body (sections 7.1.and 7.2).
- .12 It is widely recognised that the present rail industry structure and safety culture have resulted in unacceptable cost escalation. Resolution of these problems by government is vital if growth and development in rail services and usage is to be achieved. We believe our proposals will not necessarily increase the revenue support needed per se; on the contrary, improved service quality would attract more users and lead to a revenue gain. Although many services will always need revenue support, the gap between their costs and the attributable revenue can be minimised by such means. One way in which the financial performance of some of the more rural services can be improved is by designating them as community railways with increased local management focus and possible scope for cost reduction (Section 7.2).

- .1 Mudiad annibynnol a gwirfoddol yw'r Gymdeithas Datblygu Rheilffyrdd. Mae'n gweithredu trwy'r Deyrnas Undedig am fwy o fuddsoddiad yn y rheilffyrdd ac yn ceisio hybu mwy o ddefnydd ohonynt. Hefyd mae'n cynrychioli cwsmeriaid y rheilffyrdd, boed deithwyr neu'r rhai sy'n anfon nwyddau gyda'r rheil. Mae canghennau Cymru yn cynnwys Cymru gyfan a Lein Cymru a'r Gororau sy'n rhedeg drwy siroedd y ffin.
- .2 'Rydym ni'n credu y gallai'r rheilffyrdd chwarae rhan llawer mwy i gwrdd â holl anghenion trafndiaeth yr ardal o'i gymharu â'r degawdau diweddar. Trwy hybu'r rheilffyrdd, ar gyfer teithwyr a nwyddau, fe fyddwn yn cyfrannu tuag at fwriad y llywodraeth i leihau gorlawnder a llygredd y ffyrdd, i wella hygyrchedd (ac yn sgil hynny, cynwysoldeb cymdeithiasol) ar gyfer gwaith, cyfleusterau iechyd a hamdden, i'r rhai sy ddim yn galu defnyddio car yr holl amser, ac i wella'r amgylchfyd yn gyffredinol. Mae hi'n elfen hanfodol o ddatblygu cynladwy, dyletswydd statudol mae rhaid i'r Cynulliad Cenedlaethol hybu.
- .3 I wireddu hyn, mae'n hanfodol gweld newid arwyddocaol yn nulliau trafndiaeth - i ffwrdd o'r ffyrdd a thuag at y rheilffyrdd. Beth bynnag, fe fydd rhaid i'r rheilffyrdd ddenu cwsmeriaid trwy gynnig gwasanaeth atyniadol o safbwynt bod yn aml, dibynadwy, cyfforddus, diogel ac am gost rhesymol. Heb hyn oll, mae'n anhebyg y bydd gyrrwyr ceir yn meddwl o ddifri am y rheilffyrdd fel ffordd arall o drafaelio ar gyfer pob taith.
- .4 Yn y rhan fwyaf o Gymru, nid yw'r gwasanaethau ar gyfer teithwyr yn cwrdd â'r meini prawf yma yn ddigon da. Ar adeg pan mae galw cynyddol am drafnidiaeth, a thagfeydd ar y fyrdd yn cynyddu, mae rhai gwasanaethau rheil yn parhau i fod yn annigonol yn o leiaf un o'r meini prawf hyn, ac felly ni chyrhaeddant eu nod o newid y patrwm.
- .5 Yn yr ail argraffiad hwn o'r Cynllun, croesawn rhai datblygiadau cadarnhaol sydd wedi, neu sydd ar fin digwydd, ers yr argraffiad cyntaf yn 2000, ond hoffem dynnu sylw at rai pethai negyddol (adran 2). Awgrymwn ffyrdd i ddileu yr agweddau negyddol, ac i adeiadu ar y rhai cadarnhaol, trwy nodi beth a ellir ei wneud i wireddu'r gobeithion yn paragraff 3. Mae'n bwysig meddwl am rwydwaith Cymru a'r gororau mewn termau strategol rhanbarthol, yn lle casgliad o wasanaethau lleol digyswllt, neu dim mwy nag estyniad o'r rhwydwaith Seisnig. Oherwydd natur bratiog y diwidiant trafndiaeth a llywodraeth leol, rhoddir y pwyslais ar beth a ellir ei wneud, yn hytrach na sut. Credwn y gelid goresgyn yr anhawsterau yn y cyrff hyn pe bai'r ewyllus yno.
- .6 I alluogi i'r rheilffyrdd gyrraedd eu llawn dwf, fe ddylai trenau ar gyfer teithwyr ddychwelyd at rai o'r leiniau sydd ar hyn o bryd ar gyfer trenau nwyddau un unig, gan gynnwys Cwm Ebbwy ac Abertyleri i Gasnewydd; Y Barri i Benybont ar Ogwr (Lein Bro Morgannwg - i fod i ddigwydd yn 2005)); Lein Rhanbath Abertawe (Port Talbot - Treforys - Llanelli); Aberdâr - Hirwaun (estyniad byr i'r gwasanaeth presennol). Cynigir gorsafoedd newydd ar y rhain ac ar wasanaethau sy ar hyn o bryd yn rhedeg. Fe awgrymir hefyd ychydig o ail-adeiladu rheilffyrdd caeedig lle mae'n bosib gweld lles strategol, gan gynnwys Bangor i Gaernarfon (Adran 6).
- .7 Ar gyfer y leiniau bron i gyd, fe ddylai trenau (ar gyfer teithwyr) redeg o leia bob dwy awr, ond gyda mwyafrif y gwasanaethau bob hanner awr neu awr. Ar rannau o rwydwaith Caerdydd a'r Cymoedd, fe ddylai gwasanaethau redeg yn fwy aml.

Hefyd, mae'n bwysig i'r gwasanaethau redeg rhwng 0600 hyd at 2300, Llun i Sadwrn. Yn sgil y newidiadau mewn arferion cymdeithasol ar y Sul, ac fel y mae hi yng ngwledydd eraill Ewropeaidd, ni ddylai gwasanaethau'r Sul fod yn llawer gwahanol, ac eithrio y rhai ar gyfer cymudwyr neu blant ysgol. Dylid mabwysiadu yn gyffredinol yr egwyddor o amseru 'wyneb-cloc', i hwyluso teithwyr i ddeall yr amserlen ac i hwyluso dylunio amserlen ble mae gwasanaethau'n integreiddio a chysylltu gyda'i gilydd (Adran 4.1).

- .8 Mae gennym ni hefyd gynlluniau i greu teithiau di-wniad, trwy, er enghraifft, newid y fframwaith o reolau ar gyfer trên yn cysylltu â thrên a thrwy wella'r trefniadau ar gyfer cysylltiadau rhyngmoddol (trên - bws a thrên - fferi). I berswadio mwy a mwy o bobl i deithio gyda thrafnidiaeth gyhoeddus, rhagwelir nifer o syniadau ar gyfer tocynnau, gan gynnwys cerdyn-teithio lluosmoddol (Adran 4.2).
- .9 I wneud teithio gyda'r trên yn brofiad hyfryd, diogel a chyfleus, mae'n bwysig gweld mwy o gyfleusterau (o safon uchel) ar y gorsafoedd ac ar y trenau. Er ein bod wedi gweld gwelliant yn ddiweddar yn safon gwybodaeth ynglyn â sut mae gwasanaeth yn rhedeg, mae angen mawr o hyd i ddarparu cyhoeddusrwydd ynglyn ag amserlenni, cyfleusterau, a phrysiâu tocynnau. Mae cynigion ar gael ar gyfer datrys y broblem o ddiffyg gwybodaeth (Adrannai 4.3 - 4.5).
- .10 Fwy fwy cydnabyddir y buddiannau o ehangu rhan o'r farchnad i nwyddau gyda rheil. Cymerwyd rhai camau ymlaen yn y blynyddoedd diweddar, ond mae digon o le i wella. Ymhlith yr awgrymiadau mae cyynyddu nifer y lleoedd llwytho bach, gwella'r cymhellion, ac hefyd ail edrych ar ganiatad cynllunio ar gyfer lleoli safleoedd diwidydiannol a marchnata (Adran 5).
- .11 Ar ôl sefydlu'r Cynulliad newidiodd y trefniadau gwleidyddol a gweinyddol. Mae'n ymddangos bod y Cynulliad mewn sefyllfa dda i gymryd arolwg strategol, rhanbarthol dros y rhwydwaith rheilffordd a gyfeiriwyd ato ym mharagraff 5. Ond hyd yn hyn mae ei allu i weithredu wedi ei gyfyngu gan ei ddiffyg rheolaeth dros y gwasanaethau rheil, yn wahanol i'r rhan fwaf o'r gwasanaethau cyhoeddus eraill. Yr ydym felly yn croesawu'r datganiad ym Mhapur Gwyn diweddaraf y Llywodraeth (Gorffennaf 2004) bod grymoedd ychwanegol i'w dataganoli i'r Cynulliad ynglyn â fasnach - freintiad Cymru a'r Gororau. Ni fyddai hyn o anghenraid yn ddigon i sylweddoli sistem drafndiaith integrol gwirioneddol; Cynigiwn Awdurdod Trafnidiaeth Teithwyr (PTA) fel y ffordd ymlaen, o bosib gyda chyrrff llywodraeth leol sydd yn bodoli eisioes, yn isadrannau un corff Cymru-gyfan (Adrannau 7.1 a 7.2).
- .12 Cydnabyddir bod y strwythur rheilffyrdd presennol a'r gyfundrefn diogelwch wedi achosi cynnydd annerbyniol mewn costau. Mae'n rhaid i'r llywodraeth oresgyn y problemau hyn os yw'r gwasanaethau rheilffyrdd a'r defnydd ohonynt i gynyddu. Credwn na wnaiff ein awgrymiadau ychwanegu at y cymorthdaliadau angenrheidiol presennol o angenrheidrwydd. Ar y llaw arall, byddai gwelliant mewn darpariaeth yn denu mwy o ddefnyddwyr ac yn arwain at well incwm. Gellid gwella enillion y gwasanaethau mwyaf gwledig trwy eu dynodi yn rheilffyrdd cymunedol, gyda'r pwyslais ar fwy o reolaith lleol, ac o bosib lleihad mewn costau. Er y bydd angen cymorthdaliadau ar lawer o wasanaethau, galai'r gwahaniaeth rhwng eu costau a'r incwm a greir ganddynt gael ei leihau yn y fyrdd awrgrymwyd (Adran 7.2).

## 2 Preface to the Second Edition

### - *a progress report*

- .1 In February 2000 the RDAs South Wales (now *Railfuture South Wales*) branch published the first edition of this Development Plan. It was intended to illustrate to decision-makers and others the improvements in rail services which we felt essential to secure greater use of rail. This would accord with government policy of securing modal shift from road to rail, and would help to secure the future of rail services. Four years on, it is appropriate to review what has actually happened.
- .2 This second edition is also expanded to cover rail services across Wales, with contributions from *Railfuture Cambrian Lines* and *North Wales* branches. The three branches will be collectively referred to as *Railfuture Wales* in this document.

### 2.1 Some positive developments

- .1 There has been a general trend of growth in usage on many routes, particularly on the Cardiff Valley lines, where some service enhancements have been made to keep pace with it (though overcrowding remains a problem).
- .2 Enhanced infrastructure has enabled more frequent train services to operate in the Cynon Valley (though not yet half-hourly to Aberdare throughout the day), and later evening services have been introduced on this line.
- .3 An evening peak hour train from Cardiff to Swansea was restored after being withdrawn some years previously; a welcome incremental improvement but one which still leaves the basic service on this corridor well below the optimum.
- .4 Provision of a connecting service to Milford Haven from the evening London Paddington - Carmarthen train has improved the journey for west Wales passengers travelling on the latter.
- .5 Half-hourly services between Cardiff and London Paddington now operate during Monday to Friday daytime, but not at weekends.
- .6 A Sunday service on the Heart of Wales line now operates throughout the year.
- .7 New trains (Class 175) have been introduced in north Wales and offer improved passenger standards compared with those they replaced.
- .8 The Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) has provided finance for several rail schemes, including infrastructure upgrading and service enhancements.
- .9 The latest government White Paper (July 2004) recognises that the Welsh Assembly needs to have additional control of the services provided by the Wales and Borders operator, together with the necessary financial resources, if it is to achieve a fully integrated transport system.
- .10 There is less of a consensus over whether a Passenger Transport Executive (PTE) style structure is most appropriate in Wales, as opposed to the consortia of local authorities. Some (but not all) of the latter have produced impressive strategies and have commenced implementing them insofar as they have the powers and resources to do so.

## 2.2 Some developments ‘in the pipeline’

- .1 The reopening of the Vale of Glamorgan and Ebbw Vale lines to regular passenger trains is anticipated in 2005/6, although this is only the first stage of the scheme in the latter case.
- .2 Improved services between north Wales and London Euston are to be introduced by Virgin Trains.
- .3 A second hourly fast service between Cardiff and Swansea will result from the introduction by Arriva Trains Wales (ATW) of hourly Manchester - Cardiff - west Wales services, from 2005.
- .4 Hourly long-distance services on the Chester - Shrewsbury line will result from ATW's plans for two-hourly Chester - Wrexham - Birmingham and two-hourly Holyhead - Wrexham - Cardiff services, from 2005. These will also improve travel between north and south Wales, and will increase service frequency on the Marches route.
- .5 An earlier weekday arrival at Aberystwyth (09.20, instead of 11.20 as now) is expected from 2005.
- .6 Relatively new Class 175 trains will be used on more of the long-distance routes from 2006 onwards.

## 2.3 Some negative developments

- .1 There has been a progressive withdrawal of through train services, particularly affecting west Wales. That region has lost through services to Birmingham, Salisbury / Southampton / Portsmouth, and London Waterloo. The Marches line has lost the Portsmouth / Bristol / Shrewsbury / Liverpool and Waterloo trains.
- .2 The much-heralded improvement in ‘cross country’ services, offering through trains from south Wales to north east England and Scotland, lasted less than one year. Its mass withdrawal has left the situation worse than it was in the first place, in that the single daily train on the route does not now operate west of Cardiff.
- .3 Connection arrangements, especially at Train Operating Company (TOC) ‘boundaries’, have worsened in some cases, sometimes to an unacceptable degree. Examples include Hereford and Gloucester.
- .4 ‘Walk-on’ fares have risen unacceptably for some journeys, for example as a result of actions by the dominant operator on the Cardiff - Birmingham route.
- .5 The state of, facilities at and provision of passenger information at some stations, particularly in north Wales, have become unacceptable for the 21st century.
- .6 Little real progress has been made in integrating rail and bus services. Through inter-modal ticketing is welcome, but it has mostly not been accompanied by timetable connections and improved physical transfer arrangements.

## 2.4 Future needs

- .1 The remainder of this report is devoted to demonstrating how these negative aspects could be overcome and how to build on the positive developments to give Wales and the Borders a rail system and services fit for the 21st century.

### 3 Introduction

- .1 *Railfuture (The Railway Development Society)* is a UK-wide independent voluntary organisation which campaigns for greater investment in, and use of, the rail network and acts as a consumer body for rail users. This Rail Development Plan is being published by the Wales branches, which between them cover the whole of Wales and the Marches line running through the border counties. Copies of the Plan are being distributed widely to the National Assembly, local authorities, the SRA, train operating companies, Network Rail, the media and others: we hope thereby to stimulate as wide a debate as possible.
- .2 We believe rail can, and must, play a much larger role in meeting the transport needs of Wales and the Borders than it has done in recent decades. Greater use of rail, for both passengers and freight, will contribute to the Government's aims of reducing traffic congestion and pollution, and improving accessibility to work, health and leisure facilities for those who do not have access to a car at all times. Rail traffic is far less damaging in environmental terms than are cars and lorries. Therefore, making greater use of the rail network is an essential component of sustainable development, which the National Assembly for Wales is statutorily required to promote.
- .3 For these benefits to be realised, significant modal shift from road to rail is essential, but a pre-requisite for this is that rail must offer an attractive service, in terms of frequency, reliability, comfort, security and price. Without this, car owners are unlikely to consider rail as a serious alternative to using their cars for every journey.
- .4 In much of Wales, rail passenger services currently do not meet these criteria adequately. At a time of rising demand and road traffic congestion, some rail services continue to be deficient in one or more of these criteria and therefore are not currently reaching their full potential in achieving this modal shift. A disturbing trend of recent years has been the discontinuance of through services, particularly from west Wales, which has already lost through trains to Birmingham and to Salisbury / Southampton / Portsmouth and to London Waterloo. Experience shows that passengers do value through services, avoiding the need to change and rely on connections. Furthermore, a study undertaken for the the South West Wales Integrated Transport Consortium (SWWITCH) revealed that nearly half the originating rail passengers in that area are travelling to destinations outside the area.
- .5 In this Plan, proposals are made which we believe will halt and reverse this relative decline. We emphasises the need to look at the Wales and the Borders rail network in strategic, regional terms rather than as a series of unconnected local services or merely as an extension of the English network. The emphasis is on what should be done, rather than how it might be implemented - this is for the professionals to decide, given adequate resources for the task. We believe that the difficulties inherent in the fragmented nature of the privatised rail industry and of Welsh local government can be overcome if the will is there to make a step change in the quality and extent of service provision. The work done by local authority consortia such as the South East Wales Transport Alliance (SEWTA) and SWWITCH represents significant progress in this regard, though many problems remain. Although significant investment will be needed, none of what is proposed is unrealistic if

politicians and others really are serious about tackling the issue of road congestion and achieving a public transport network of which Wales and the Borders can be proud.

- .6 At UK level, the government has made clear its commitment to developing an integrated public transport network. Hitherto, the Welsh Assembly's lack of control of rail services has been an obstacle to achieving this in Wales, and so we welcome the latest White Paper (July 2004) in which the government proposes to devolve greater powers, in relation to the Wales and Borders franchise. Local control of regional rail services has been adopted widely, and with considerable success, in mainland Europe. It is also gaining ground in the UK, with Merseyside (which does not have devolved government) now in control of the Merseyrail franchise, Scotland, London (in respect of Underground services) and Northern Ireland (when the latter's Assembly is functioning) all have these powers, so granting them to the Welsh Assembly will be timely.
- .7 We believe that Wales is being short-changed in public transport terms compared to other parts of the UK and other EU countries. Conurbations such as the Manchester area and the West Midlands have Passenger Transport Authorities (PTAs) which specify local service levels and fares and ensure that rail and bus routes are properly integrated. In West Yorkshire, the Airedale and Wharfedale routes were previously operated by 'Pacer' trains (as the Cardiff Valley lines still are), but now modern state-of-the-art electric trains have played a major part in these routes securing 75% of the commuting traffic into Leeds. There, and in London and south east England, service frequencies are usually significantly higher than in highly-populated parts of Wales, the differences often being for historical reasons rather than based on social need. The contrast between what passes for a public transport network in the UK and the highly efficient, well-researched and user-friendly systems in (for example) the Netherlands and Germany could hardly be greater. Why should the people of Wales be denied such facilities when they are seen as a basic right elsewhere?

## 4 Passenger services

### 4.1 Service levels

#### 4.1.1 General principles

- .1 All routes must be served at least every two hours if rail is to have any hope of being the first choice of mode of transport. Even in the most rural areas, people do not usually want to spend more than a couple of hours at their destination, for shopping, medical appointments etc. - and they do not want to be constrained in the timing of their activities by a hopelessly infrequent train service.
- .2 In well-populated areas services should be hourly or half-hourly.
- .3 In the areas of highest population, services at least every quarter hour are needed.
- .4 All routes must be served 365 days a year. Why should those who are dependent on public transport be denied travel facilities on Christmas Day or Boxing Day? How else can such people visit their families or engage in other leisure activities on those days?
- .5 All routes must be served at least 0600 - 2300 Monday - Saturday.
- .6 In view of the changes in Sunday travel patterns in recent years, all routes must follow the European norm of Sunday services being similar to those on weekdays, except for some commuter / school journeys not being required.
- .7 A 'clock-face' regular interval service pattern is needed on all routes, to help passengers to remember timetables and for ease of links with other rail services (and with buses etc.). Peak hour extras should be easily remembered in terms of the normal service pattern (eg: if the normal interval is at xx.05 minutes past each hour, the peak extra should be at xx.35).

#### 4.1.2 Service levels for individual routes

- .1 This section lays out what *Railfuture Wales* believes is the service pattern which is needed to achieve a significant switch to use of rail on route in Wales and the Borders, within the framework of the basic principles set out in 4.1.1. Services are described below in one direction only, in the interests of clarity. In all cases it should be assumed that corresponding services in the reverse direction are implied.
- .2 Diagrammatic maps summarising our ideas for services can be seen at the end of this plan.

##### 4.1.2.1 Marches line (Cardiff - Hereford - Shrewsbury - the North)

- .1 A half-hourly service should operate on this route. Stopping patterns should vary according to potential usage, but all stations (including reopened ones at Caerleon and Pontrilas) should have at least an hourly service.
- .2 A suggested pattern for these services is hourly from Swansea / west Wales to Manchester or Liverpool, two-hourly from Cardiff to Bangor / Holyhead, and two hourly from Bristol Temple Meads (and beyond) to Shrewsbury (and beyond).

- .3 The through services to / from Bristol should call at Newport and reverse there, to maximise connection opportunities. The small number of trains hitherto have shown that significant traffic potential exists on this route. Our proposal for a regular two-hourly service would replace, and enhance, the limited number of 'one-off' trains which have operated the route in recent years.
- .4 Improved connections at Hereford with services to / from Malvern, Worcester and Birmingham are essential, the present arrangements there being extremely poor. A half-hourly service on the Marches line will improve matters in itself, but is not necessarily sufficient on its own.

#### **4.1.2.2 Chepstow line (Cardiff - Newport - Chepstow - Gloucester)**

- .1 There should be an enhanced west Wales - Cardiff - Chepstow - Worcester - Birmingham (and beyond) service at hourly intervals, with all trains calling at Caldicot, Chepstow and Lydney.
- .2 A new hourly local service should operate between Cardiff and Gloucester or Cheltenham (giving onward connections). Together with the service described in para 4.1.2.2.1, this would give Caldicot, Chepstow and Lydney a half-hourly service, and would provide an hourly service for new stations at Magor, Celtic Lakes / Coedkernew and St. Mellons. This would help to relieve road congestion around Newport and on the eastern side of Cardiff.
- .3 The existing, extremely limited Virgin Cross Country inter-city service to north east England should be enhanced to operate every two hours to and from Birmingham, Sheffield, north east England and Scotland. It should operate via the Chepstow line (though running fast between Newport and Gloucester) rather than via Bristol Parkway to allow the fastest possible service into and out of south Wales.

#### **4.1.2.3 Ebbw Valley lines (reopened - using existing freight line)**

- .1 *Railfuture Wales* has long advocated the reopening of these lines to passenger services and is delighted that this scheme is soon to come to fruition, with opening in late 2006 between Ebbw Vale Parkway and Cardiff.
- .2 As a second phase, we believe that the service should consist of hourly services between Abertillery and Cardiff, and between Ebbw Vale and Newport. Inter-change between the two services should be provided at (for example) Aberbeeg. This should be implemented as soon as possible after the first phase.

#### **4.1.2.4 Newport area light rail system**

- .1 A light rail system for Newport should be considered as a possible solution to easing the city's traffic problems and congestion. It would link major destinations, including educational, employment and leisure sites with the main population areas and the rail and bus stations

#### **4.1.2.5 Cardiff Valley lines**

- .1 We believe the service levels shown in table 1 to be essential.

Cardiff (or south thereof) to Caerphilly (with some to be limited stop between Cardiff Queen Street and Caerphilly)	6 trains per hour
Caerphilly to Ystrad Mynach	4 trains per hour
Ystrad Mynach to Bargoed	3 trains per hour
Reopened route from Ystrad Mynach to Nelson and possibly Treharris using an existing freight line as far as Nelson	1 train per hour
Bargoed to Rhymney	2 trains per hour
Cardiff (or south thereof) to Pontypridd: some to be limited stop services south of Trefforest	8 trains per hour
Pontypridd to Treherbert	2 trains per hour
Pontypridd to Abercynon	4 trains per hour
Abercynon to Merthyr	2 trains per hour
Abercynon to Aberdare	2 trains per hour
Aberdare to Hirwaun on a reopened section using an existing freight line	1 train per hour
Bridgend to Maesteg (with dedicated bus link to Caerau)	2 trains per hour

table 1

#### 4.1.2.6 Vale of Glamorgan line (Barry to Bridgend reopened)

.1 This line is in use already for freight traffic and for passenger trains diverted from the main line via Pontyclun. *Railfuture Wales* has campaigned for many years to have this line reopened to regular passenger services, so we are very pleased that this reopening is scheduled for 2005. We feel that the route needs a combination of local and longer-distance services, and that it is particularly important to open up access to Cardiff Airport by public transport from Swansea and south west Wales without change of train at Bridgend. Therefore the service should be:-

- hourly semi-fast trains from Bristol Temple Meads and beyond to run via Barry and the Airport to Bridgend, continuing as a local service to Swansea and west Wales;
- hourly local trains: Cardiff Valleys - Cardiff - Barry - Airport - Bridgend.

#### 4.1.2.7 Barry Island and Penarth lines

- .1 There should be a half-hourly service to / from Barry Island, the trains serving stations to Cardiff Queen Street and then one or more Cardiff Valleys destinations.
- .2 The service advocated above for the Vale of Glamorgan line would dovetail with the Barry Island service to provide a train every 15 minutes between Barry Town and Cardiff, with the Vale services running to / from Swansea and Llanelli.
- .3 At least one of these four trains an hour should be a fast service between Barry Town and Cardiff Central.
- .4 There should be four trains each hour between Penarth and Cardiff Queen Street, going forward to serve one or more Cardiff Valleys destinations (alternatively, one of the three could form the Cardiff to Abertillery service referred to above).

#### 4.1.2.8 Cardiff light rail (incorporating the City, Coryton and Cardiff Bay lines)

- .1 For its size, Cardiff has an extremely good rail infrastructure, but nevertheless, it does not cover the whole city. In particular, the east of the city is poorly served and the fast-developing Cardiff Bay, while it has a rail link, is not directly served from Cardiff Central station. Other major traffic generators, such as the University Hospital at Heath, are not on the rail network.
- .2 Light Rail (LRT) has shown, in Britain and abroad, that it is well capable of bringing rail-based benefits to places not served by rail, more flexibly and at a fraction of the cost. At the same time, it is capable of transporting more people than buses and is better than buses at attracting people out of cars to use it.
- .3 There has been much discussion as to whether LRT should take over or add to the existing Valleys lines routes in the city, or whether it should concentrate on new routes, currently unserved by rail. The jury is still out on this; probably a combination of the two is the best solution.
- .4 The Cardiff Bay line should be converted to LRT, with the important proviso that it must directly serve Cardiff Central Station as well as Cardiff Bay. South of Cardiff Central, it should run on the reservation set aside for this on the west side of Lloyd George Avenue.
- .5 The City line between Cardiff and Radyr, and the Coryton line (between Heath and Coryton) should be converted to LRT and a link provided between Radyr and Coryton. This would provide a circular route, which, inter alia, would effectively give a doubling of frequency from the stations furthest from the city centre. A new station on the link at Forest Farm would be a Park and Ride, serving Forest Farm Industrial Estate and the Asda superstore. An additional station at Victoria Park could serve the urban village proposed for the redundant Arjo Wiggins paper mill site, as well as existing development. Between Cardiff Central and Heath, there would be on-street running, with a route servicing several main traffic generators of the city, such as the Civic Centre, the University and the University Hospital at Heath. It may be advantageous to convert the existing City line between Radyr and Cardiff Central for dual use running so that some passenger trains and freight trains from the Taff Valley could still use this route. There are good precedents for this in Tyne and Wear, and in Karlsruhe, Germany.

- .6 Beyond, this, the detail is less clear, but five routes would make significant contributions to solving Cardiff's traffic problems. The first two are based on the Cowbridge Road - Newport Road axis which takes a lot of traffic and has significant bus use. However, the roads themselves would not be used much by LRT:-
- a spur off the Circle line from Victoria Park to Culverhouse Cross;
  - a route east from Central Station and continuing alongside the railway as far as St. Mellons, where there could be a Park and Ride station. A spur from the line to Cardiff Bay looping back along the existing freight line would join this route at Adamsdown;
  - a line serving north east Cardiff, which has ever more housing and is poorly served by public transport. This could leave the City Circle at Heath Hospital;
  - extensions of the route to Cardiff Bay, to service developments there and terminating at the Sports Village, currently under development;
  - provision of a new line from the City Circle line extending westwards from Fairwater to Creigiau and beyond, following generally the route of the former rail line on that corridor.
- .7 Further work needs to be done to determine whether LRT should continue along the Taff and Rhymney rail routes. They have potential for a good rail service; perhaps adding LRT would overstrain the infrastructure. However, providing LRT as far as Pontypridd and Caerphilly could allow faster rail journeys between these towns and the city centre for those trains originating beyond those points, as they could omit most local stations on the LRT sections.

#### **4.1.2.9 Maesteg line, Llantrisant and Beddau**

- .1 The successful reopening of the Maesteg line should be built upon by:-
- enhancing the service to half-hourly between Bridgend and Maesteg, with alternate trains running through to / from Cardiff via Pontyclun, and equivalent enhancement of the dedicated bus link to / from Caerau;
  - opening new stations at Llangynwyd, Brackla, Llanharan and St. Fagans;
  - investigating the demand for reopening to passenger trains the existing freight line from Pontyclun to Llantrisant and Beddau.

#### **4.1.2.10 South and west Wales lines (Severn Tunnel to Cardiff, Swansea, Carmarthen, Pembroke Dock, Milford Haven and Fishguard Harbour)**

- .1 We believe that these lines, which largely serve well-populated areas, are capable of making a much greater contribution to the public transport system of the region. However, the levels of service currently provided fall far short of those needed to persuade people to see rail as a sensible alternative to the car.
- .2 Frequencies to the east of Cardiff would be greatly enhanced by provision of new or increased services already referred to:-
- new hourly local service between Cardiff and Gloucester / Cheltenham, serving St. Mellons, Celtic Lakes / Coedkernew, Newport, Magor and Severn Tunnel Junction on the south Wales Line;
  - enhanced Cardiff - Gloucester - Worcester - Birmingham service, at hourly intervals, serving Newport;
  - half-hourly service Newport - Hereford (and beyond);
  - new hourly service Cardiff to Abertillery, which could serve St. Mellons and Celtic Lakes / Coedkernew.

- .3 A combination of local and long distance services between Cardiff, Bristol Temple Meads, London Waterloo and the south and west of England would provide at least two trains per hour between Cardiff and Bristol Temple Meads.
- .4 Similarly, frequencies between Cardiff and Bridgend via Pontyclun would be enhanced by:-
- increasing the Swanline local service (see 4.1.2.9.9) to hourly via Pontyclun, which, together with the hourly Maesteg service, would give a half-hourly stopping service on this section, serving St. Fagans, Pontyclun, Llanharan, Pencoed, Brackla and Bridgend on the main line;
  - possible provision of a service from Cardiff to Beddau, serving St. Fagans and Pontyclun on the main line.
- .5 So far as the service between Bridgend and Swansea is concerned, we believe the following routes and frequencies are needed:-
- the existing hourly interval inter-city service between London Paddington and Swansea should be retained;
  - the hourly Marches line service (see 4.1.2.1 above) should continue as a limited stop service from Cardiff to west Wales, calling at Bridgend, Port Talbot and Neath;
  - these two services together would provide a limited-stop service every 30 minutes between Swansea and Cardiff: we regard this as vital in such a highly-populated area;
  - there is now a second hourly service to London Paddington from Cardiff during Monday to Friday daytime (though not at weekends). Connections from west Wales should be by means of the aforementioned limited stop service from west Wales, giving in effect a half hourly west Wales / Swansea to Paddington service.
- .6 The west Wales - Birmingham hourly service (see 4.1.2.2) should run direct to and call at Bridgend and Port Talbot (where it would connect with other services to and from Swansea).
- .7 After Port Talbot, this service should operate via the Swansea District line, an existing freight by-pass for Swansea which would be reopened to regular passenger traffic. There would be new parkway stations at Llandarcy, Murrison (near M4 junction 45 at Ynysforan) and Grovesend (near M4 junction 48 at Hendy). These new stations would provide greatly enhanced rail facilities for the north of Swansea. In addition to large, secure car parks, bus links would be available, for example from Murrison Parkway to Murrison Hospital and the DVLA, Pontardawe and the Swansea Valley. There would also be a rail link from Grovesend Parkway to Pontarddulais.
- .8 From Grovesend, the Birmingham trains would serve Llangennech and Bynea on request (see 4.1.2.11), then Llanelli, Pembrey, Carmarthen, Whitland and stations to Milford Haven / Tenby.
- .9 The existing "Swanline" local service operates approximately every two hours: this is hopelessly inadequate for a service aimed at commuters in a highly populated area. Instead, we advocate a local service every 30 minutes between Swansea and Bridgend, with alternate trains running via the Airport and Barry to Cardiff and beyond, and via Pontyclun to Cardiff. There would be connections at Port Talbot or Bridgend for through trains to destinations east of Cardiff and with fast trains to Cardiff / London.

- .10 Thus, our proposals for the direct Cardiff to Swansea route would lead to:-
- fast trains every 30 minutes from beyond Newport to Neath and Swansea;
  - a fast train every hour from Birmingham to Cardiff, Bridgend, Port Talbot, Morriston, Grovesend, Llanelli and Milford Haven / Tenby;
  - local trains every hour Maesteg - Bridgend - Cardiff;
  - local trains every 30 minutes Swansea - Bridgend - Cardiff, with alternate trains running via the airport and Barry, and via Pontyclun.
- .11 There are many possible permutations of through services from east of Cardiff to west of Swansea, and the foregoing is but one possible pattern. Other ways exist of meeting the same frequencies and maximising through journey opportunities.
- .12 We suggest that demand for opening a light rail route from Bridgend or Pyle to Porthcawl should be investigated. On a short route such as this, the “Parry People Mover” tram system would enable a service to be provided as economically as possible.
- .13 West of Swansea, we believe that a service every 30 minutes is needed, at least as far as Carmarthen, if the railway is to have any realistic chance of competing with car use on the M4 / A48. This should be achieved by:-
- the hourly Birmingham - Cardiff - Swansea District line - Llanelli - Carmarthen - west Wales service (described above). The terminal point of this service should alternate between Milford Haven and Tenby;
  - a train every hour from Bristol Temple Meads and beyond via the airport and Bridgend to Swansea, thence calling at Llanelli and all stations to Whitland, thence on alternate hours to Pembroke Dock and to Milford Haven, i.e. alternating with the Birmingham trains just described;
  - between Swansea and Llanelli, the second train each hour would be the through Manchester - west Wales service, terminating at Llanelli and connecting there with the Birmingham - west Wales service described above;
  - interchange between the Tenby / Pembroke Dock and Milford Haven services should be provided at Carmarthen.
- .14 For Fishguard, see paragraph 4.1.2.17.
- .15 Routeing trains from both Birmingham via the Swansea District line, and from Swansea High Street, alternately to Milford and the Tenby line would result in both the Milford and Tenby lines having trains every two hours to / from Birmingham and Swansea (etc). This would maximise through journey opportunities.
- .16 The station at St. Clears should be reopened and an hourly service provided. Consideration should be given also to reopening the stations at Cockett and Loughor. In view of the coastal park development at Llanelli, a station at the junction of the Swansea - Llanelli and Swansea District lines near Trostre could be useful: as well as serving the western end of the coastal park, it would also give access to the wildlife centre at Penclawydd and to the proposed new Llanelli rugby stadium to replace the existing site at Stradey Park.

#### **4.1.2.11 Heart of Wales line (Swansea - Llanelli - Llandoverly - Llandrindod - Shrewsbury)**

- .1 This line is vital to the rural communities of mid Wales which it serves. It also has

great potential as a through route from Swansea and west Wales to north west England, north Wales and Scotland. However, the existing apology for a train service on this line operates at no more than approximately four hourly intervals on weekdays. On Sundays, despite the lack of other public transport and the importance of tourism to the areas served, a single train in each direction is the sum total of the SRA-funded service. We believe that this disgraceful situation cannot be allowed to continue.

- .2 Development of the Heart of Wales line should be tackled in two stages.

**Stage 1:-**

- in the short term, the weekday service interval should be every two hours - in accordance with the minimum advocated in this Plan for all lines in Wales;
- the service should run at regular intervals, so that connections with other 'clock-face' services are more readily arranged;
- in order to reduce the need to change trains when making long-distance journeys, the Heart of Wales service should be extended from Shrewsbury to Crewe, combining it with the existing local service on that route - thus restoring a facility which was largely withdrawn several years ago;
- the present route taken by Heart of Wales line trains from Pontarddulais via Llanelli to Swansea is very indirect for passengers who want to connect with trains to Cardiff and beyond. Therefore, pending Stage 2, at least two trains in the enhanced service should be diverted at Pontarddulais via the existing freight-only link onto the Swansea District line as far as Port Talbot for eastward connections. These trains could then reverse at Port Talbot and continue to Swansea via Neath - or they could operate to / from Cardiff, which would be useful for shoppers and people attending meetings etc.

**Stage 2:** this should be implemented along with the introduction of the Birmingham - Swansea District line - west Wales service:-

- between Pontarddulais and Swansea, all Heart of Wales line trains should be diverted onto the Swansea District line to serve the new station at Grovesend Parkway. There would be connections there into / out of the Birmingham - west Wales service in both directions. From Grovesend, Heart of Wales line trains would run onto the rebuilt Grovesend to Gowerton line, serving a reopened station at Gorseinon. At Gowerton, they would join the Llanelli / Swansea route. Passengers at Llangennech or Bynea wanting to travel towards mid Wales would be able to change at Grovesend. Llanelli passengers could change there or at Gowerton;
- a new local service should be provided, operating every two hours, between Swansea and Pantyffynnon, where it would use the existing freight line which would be reopened to passengers, with stations at Ammanford Town and possibly Glanamman. By alternating with the Swansea - Crewe service, this would give Pantyffynnon, Pontarddulais, Grovesend and Gorseinon a train every hour to and from Swansea.

**4.1.2.12 Aberystwyth and Pwllheli - Shrewsbury**

- .1 There should be an hourly service between Aberystwyth and Shrewsbury, with trains continuing to Birmingham New Street. Good connections are needed at Shrewsbury to facilitate travel to north and south Wales, Crewe, Manchester etc.
- .2 The Cambrian Coast line (Machynlleth - Pwllheli) should have a basic two-hourly

service, though in this instance strict 'clock-face' timetabling may have to be modified at some times of the day and year to allow for significant local needs (including schools traffic). At least some of the trains should run through to Shrewsbury / Birmingham, joining and splitting at Machynlleth with Aberystwyth trains.

- .3 Attention needs to be given to achieving good connections at Machynlleth (or Dovey Junction) between Aberystwyth and coast line trains, to permit journeys such as Aberystwyth to Barmouth to be made conveniently.
- .4 We believe that a case exists for new / reopened stations at Bow Street and Carno.

#### **4.1.2.13 Shrewsbury - Wrexham - Chester**

- .1 The services outlined in other sections (which have already been specified in the new Wales and Borders franchise) will result in this line having hourly long-distance services, giving both more frequent trains and a wider range of through journey opportunities. The services concerned are Holyhead - Chester - Wrexham - Cardiff and Chester - Wrexham - Birmingham. We regard this as a sensible level of provision for inter-urban services on the Shrewsbury - Chester line.
- .2 Changes in population density and distribution, and in location of business developments, have created the potential for a number of new or reopened stations on this route. These should include Baschurch, Whittington, Weston Rhyn, Cefn, Johnstown, Rossett and Chester Business Park. These stations should be served by a local hourly stopping service, which in turn would enable the long distance trains described in 4.1.2.13.1 above generally to call at Gobowen and Wrexham only, allowing reductions in journey times for long distance passengers.
- .3 We believe there is a case for rebuilding the Ruabon - Llangollen line to link the latter town (an important and busy tourist centre) to the national network once again. This would also stimulate economic development in the upper Dee Valley. At Llangollen there would be an end-on junction with the heritage Llangollen Railway. Service provision could be a joint operation between the Wales and Borders franchisee and the Llangollen Railway; the former must have a role in order to provide a service at times of day and year when the heritage railway is not operating. The Wales and Borders trains could consist of a shuttle to / from Chester, giving the Chester - Wrexham - Ruabon section a half-hourly local service, when combined with the local trains envisaged as above, in addition to the hourly fast through trains which we have specified. Wrexham would then have three trains per hour to / from Chester.
- .4 The short section of line between Gobowen and Oswestry currently forms part of a heritage-style operation and may also be used for stone traffic. It has potential for a light rail system to link a number of key locations in the district with the rail network at Gobowen, including the Orthopedic Hospital and Oswestry town centre.

#### **4.1.2.14 Holyhead and Caernarfon - Bangor - Llandudno / Llandudno Junction - Chester**

- .1 A half-hourly service should operate between Bangor and Chester, with alternate trains originating at Holyhead to give an hourly frequency on Anglesey. This should be provided by four long-distance services all operating every two hours:

- Holyhead / Bangor - Chester - Wrexham - Shrewsbury - Birmingham;
- Holyhead / Bangor - Chester - Crewe - London (but see also 4.1.2.14.5);
- Holyhead / Bangor - Chester - Wrexham - Shrewsbury - Cardiff;
- Holyhead / Bangor - Chester - Crewe or Manchester.

Under ATW's current proposals, the third and fourth of these services will commence in late 2005, but the first will run south of Chester only. Virgin Trains' latest plans are understood to include five trains per day (including one to / from Llandudno), which is less than a two-hourly frequency throughout the day. Therefore, whilst these developments are welcome, we believe they will still fall short of the optimum required. In particular, the lack of through services to / from Birmingham is regrettable.

- .2 An hourly service should continue to operate between Llandudno and Manchester via Warrington, calling at all stations and extended from Manchester Piccadilly to Manchester Airport.
- .3 New / reopened stations at Queensferry, Connah's Quay, Bagillt and Greenfield should be evaluated. Greenfield would be a railhead for nearby Holywell, with a bus link provided. These stations should be served by an additional hourly local service between Rhyl and Chester. This could usefully be done by extending the existing Crewe - Chester shuttle service. This, along with the Manchester trains, would give Shotton and Flint a half-hourly service.
- .4 Llandudno should have connecting services to / from Llandudno Junction for *all* trains calling at the latter, throughout the day and on Sundays throughout the year; the only exceptions being trains operating at night for the benefit of Holyhead ferry traffic. This would entail some local Llandudno - Llandudno Junction shuttle services to augment those provided by the Conwy Valley and Manchester trains. This shuttle could also be designed to serve a park-and-ride scheme aimed at reducing road congestion in Llandudno.
- .5 Llandudno's importance as a major tourist and conference centre provides a strong case for through trains to / from London. This could be achieved by diverting two of the daily two-hourly London - Holyhead trains (4.1.2.14.1) to run to Llandudno instead of to Holyhead. Connections would be available at Llandudno Junction for Bangor etc., to maintain the half-hourly frequency on that section. (See also 4.1.2.14.7).
- .6 Rebuilding of the Bangor - Caernarfon line is highly desirable, and when completed at least one per hour of the trains mentioned in 4.1.2.14.1 should be extended to Caernarfon, catering for both local and long-distance traffic. Caernarfon is a major regional town, the county town of Gwynedd and an important tourist centre, and would justify through trains from London, Cardiff and elsewhere.
- .7 Reopening of the line from Gaerwen to Llangefni (the county town) should be investigated. This branch could be served by an hourly local service Bangor - Llanfair PG. - Llangefni, timed to give good connections both ways. At times when the London service runs to / from Llandudno (4.1.2.14.5), this local service would be extended to / from Llandudno Junction, to connect there with the former.
- .8 There are several possible permutations of through services from Chester and beyond to north Wales, and the foregoing is but one possible pattern. With four potential termini to be served (Llandudno, Caernarfon, Holyhead, Llangefni),

together with the need to make ferry connections at Holyhead, some variation to the general pattern would be needed at some times of the day / week / year, to optimise through journey opportunities and cater adequately for the different markets involved.

.9 For further comment relating to Holyhead, see section 4.1.2.17 - Ferry Links.

#### **4.1.2.15 Conwy Valley line: Llandudno - Llandudno Jct. - Llanrwst -Betws y Coed - Blaenau Ffestiniog**

.1 There should be a two-hourly service on this route throughout the year, with hourly trains from Betws y Coed northwards, at least during the main tourist season. The Sunday train service should operate throughout the year, providing a 'gateway' to northern Snowdonia at Betws y Coed by Sherpa bus connections.

.2 The Conwy Valley line would form a key component of a 'Snowdonia Circle' route which would become available following reopening of the Bangor - Caernarfon line together with completion of the narrow gauge Welsh Highland Railway from its present terminus at Rhyd Ddu to Porthmadog. A combination of conventional rail and narrow gauge rail (the latter mostly steam-operated) would afford circular journeys such as Caernarfon - Porthmadog - Blaenau Ffestiniog -Betws y Coed - Conwy - Bangor - Caernarfon. This would mirror similar provision elsewhere in Europe, such as in Switzerland. Connecting buses would need to criss-cross the circle, and there could be some through running of trains between Blaenau Ffestiniog and Caernarfon via the Conwy Valley and the main line through Bangor. Such an initiative would have a beneficial impact on road traffic congestion and pollution in the Snowdonia National Park.

#### **4.1.2.16 Wrexham - Shotton - Bidston / Liverpool**

.1 The service frequency should be increased from hourly to half-hourly.

.2 Electrification of the Merseyrail system should be extended from Bidston at least as far south as a new station at Woodchurch, and preferably to Wrexham.

.3 The bi-level station at Shotton should be developed as a major interchange for the Deeside area. A heated waiting room and ticket office should be provided in the corner formed by the two stations so that passengers at both the low level and the high level stations would benefit. Lifts or disabled access facilities are needed between the high level and low level platforms. Passengers changing at Shotton to catch a train towards Wrexham should have a direct route to the high level platform, whereas at present they have to climb up from the low level platform, walk the length of the high level northbound platform, descend again to street level, pass under the rail bridge and climb back up to the southbound platform! The new infrastructure should also include a bus interchange and taxi rank. Some co-ordination of bus and rail timetables would be useful on those bus routes which complement the rail service.

.4 Future rolling stock for this service would depend on the extent to which the route is electrified (4.1.2.16.2). Dual-powered vehicles could provide a solution on this line if electrification is not extended throughout to Wrexham - see section 4.4.2.10.

#### 4.1.2.17 Ferry Links

- .1 It is essential to ensure not only that connections between rail services are as good as they can be, but also to link rail with other modes of public transport: without this there will not be a true network and the individual modes will be less useful to potential users.
- .2 Several Welsh ports are termini of Irish Sea ferry services. At present only at Holyhead, and to a lesser extent at Fishguard, is there any real attempt to cater for rail passengers. Significant improvements are therefore needed.
- .3 **Fishguard Harbour:** there should be four pairs of trains daily rather than two as at present. We accept that there is insufficient demand for inter-city services for most of the year, but believe that a regional express service could be justified if connections were good and the service promoted properly. These trains should serve appropriate destinations east of Cardiff, such as London or Birmingham, or at least make good connections for such places. One way of doing this might be to extend the Manchester - Llanelli service (see 4.1.2.10.13) to Fishguard at certain times of the day. If there were to be four trains each way, it would be sensible to make better provision for local users by reopening Fishguard & Goodwick station. When rail connections are not provided, there should be road coach connections between the ferries and Haverfordwest station: these should be shown in the rail and ferry timetables and rail tickets should be valid on both the trains and the coaches.
- .4 **Pembroke Dock:** there should be road connections between the rail service and ferry arrivals / departures. These might operate to / from Pembroke Dock or Haverfordwest stations, depending on which makes possible the fastest journey. The connections could be by taxi or minibus, but as at Fishguard they must be timetabled and included in the fare for the complete rail and ferry journey.
- .5 **Swansea:** the same provision should be made as at Pembroke Dock.
- .6 **Holyhead:** the rail - ferry interchange is reasonably good in that train services are available for most ferry arrivals and departures. The layout of the port, about which probably little can be done, does impose some inconvenience for passengers using other than Stena services. But Holyhead station also serves the town, access to which is very poor. This should improve when a new bridge is opened, which will provide better access to the town centre.
- .7 Any other passenger ferry services which may be introduced should have adequate public transport to serve them, either directly by rail if appropriate, or by a bus link from the nearest railhead.

#### 4.1.2.18 Swansea area light rail system

- .1 This topic has been debated at length over the years. We believe that Swansea could sustain a modern tram network and that this would provide faster and more comfortable services than the guided busways which have been advocated in some quarters.
- .2 Although the most obvious route is that from the city centre to Oystermouth and Mumbles, it would be wrong to wallow in nostalgia and think in terms simply of restoring the Mumbles Railway. A more modern system is needed, based on the best practice in Europe and in such places as Manchester, Croydon and Notting-

ham.

- .3 Line 1 would run from Mumbles via the city centre and High Street railway station to Morriston. Line 2 would operate from Gowerton Station via Sketty to High Street station and the city centre, continuing to the Marina, the new SA1 development and the park and ride at Fabian Way. It could then be extended via Llandarcy Enterprise Park to Neath Station.

#### 4.1.2.19 West Wales Coast line

- .1 The Welsh rail network has a yawning gap between the line to Fishguard and that from Aberystwyth to Pwllheli. As a longer-term project, the line from Carmarthen via Lampeter to Aberystwyth should be rebuilt, using, where possible, the former track. In the short term, new and existing bus services have a role to play on this corridor, but they need to link with trains at each end and be part of an integrated system.

#### 4.1.2.20 Other rail / road links

- .1 The need for greatly improved rail / road links has been referred to already in two cases: Haverfordwest / Fishguard and Carmarthen / Aberystwyth. We have emphasised the need for connections between modes to be timetabled, through fares to be available and services at least every two hours to be provided. Of crucial importance is that adequate physical arrangements are made for passengers transferring between modes; for example, buses must stop as close to the rail platform as possible. These principles should be applied throughout Wales and the Borders, so that a network of high quality rail and coach services is created.
- .2 Throughout Wales, examples can be found of both good and bad practice with regard to the physical aspects of inter-modal transfer. Good examples include Caerphilly, Rhyl, Haverfordwest, Aberystwyth and Blaenau Ffestiniog. Some places where interchange is extremely poor (or even non-existent) are Abergavenny, Pontypridd, Newport, Wrexham and Port Talbot. Many other towns come somewhere in between these extremes. For example, Bangor has good interchange with buses to Caernarfon and Anglesey which pass the rail station, but poor interchange with buses to Bethesda and the Ogwen Valley which depart from the bus station a mile away. There is a pressing need to apply 'best practice' principles in all cases. Again using the Bangor example, some of the Bethesda buses could be extended to the rail station, or alternatively a facility introduced which allows rail passengers to travel free of charge on any of the frequent buses which run between the rail and bus stations. This example serves to illustrate that improving rail-bus interchanges may be more a matter of the will to do it, rather than necessarily large capital expenditure.
- .3 A network of coach services should be developed to fill in the gaps in rail provision in Wales and the Borders. This would be achieved, at least in part, by linking existing local bus routes - but it is essential that high quality vehicles are used. Examples of coach routes should form part of this network include:-
- Swansea - Aberdare - Merthyr - Rhymney - Ebbw Vale - Abergavenny - Monmouth - Gloucester;
  - Merthyr - Brecon - Llandrindod - Newtown;
  - Swansea - Brecon - Hay-on-Wye - Hereford;

- Aberystwyth - Lampeter - Llandovery - Brecon - Abergavenny;
- Aberystwyth - Aberaeron - Cardigan - Fishguard - Haverfordwest - Pembroke;
- Wrexham - Bala - Dolgellau - Barmouth;
- Aberystwyth - Machynlleth - Dolgellau - Blaenau Ffestiniog - Porthmadog - Caernarfon;
- Llangollen - Corwen - Denbigh - Ruthin - Rhyl.

.4 Public transport access to some employment sites and to some significant tourist attractions remains poor, or even non-existent. Some of these deficiencies would be remedied by the various proposals contained in this document. Elsewhere, there will remain a need for effective bus links with the nearest railhead. Some examples where this approach is needed are:

- **employment sites:** Ely Valley complex (west of Cardiff); Cross Hands Industrial Park (west of Ammanford); Rassau (Ebbw Vale); Deeside Industrial Park; Wrexham Industrial Estate; St. Asaph Business Park;
- **tourist sites:** National Botanical Gardens; Oakwood Park; Elan Valley; Bodnant Gardens; South Stack (Anglesey).

#### 4.1.2.21 Minimum service frequencies

Minimum service frequencies for south Wales are listed on page 53, and for north and mid Wales on page 54.

## 4.2 Links between services: “The seamless journey”

### 4.2.1 Introduction

- .1 In this section, we start from the premise that if car users in significant numbers are to be persuaded to use any form of public transport, where there is more than one component part of a journey the parts must dovetail as much as possible. Otherwise they will not be seen as a reasonable alternative to a door-to-door car journey.
- .2 People in Wales - both locals and visitors - receive a very poor deal in this respect at present. For example, inter-availability of rail and bus tickets is much more developed in London and the Passenger Transport Authority (PTA) areas of England and Scotland. Moreover, other countries, such as the Netherlands, have far better systems of connections, not only between rail services, but between rail and bus.
- .3 We believe that a great deal could be done here at little cost if the political will existed. For example, the introduction of suitable ticketing should be enforced, coupled with any necessary legislation (which might be within the Assembly’s powers) to require the compliance of bus companies. In addition, the rewriting of existing timetables to improve connections is vital. There are difficulties, given that almost all public transport companies are privately owned. However, incentives might be offered to secure co-operation and where local authority or Assembly subsidies are involved contractual obligations can be laid down. Again, as a last resort, legislation might be needed to ensure that the interests of the travelling public are given absolute priority.

### 4.2.2 Connectional policies

- .1 This section focuses on rail / rail connections, but we would expect the same principles to be applied when connections between different modes of transport - particularly rail / road or road / rail - are involved.
- .2 The following principles should be fundamental in timetable construction:-
  - ‘clock-face’ timetables must be implemented on all routes to make connections as easy as possible to arrange;
  - if the service into which the connection is being provided is half-hourly or better, passengers should not have a timetable wait of more than 10 minutes for their connection;
  - if the service into which the connection is being provided is less frequent than half-hourly, the maximum timetable wait for a connection should be no more than 15 minutes;
  - every effort must be made to arrange rail, bus and ferry timetables with the best possible connections between modes.
- .3 The existing national railway policy on connections between services needs to be stated more precisely and be much more widely known than the current note hidden in the preface to the national timetable.
- .4 The current policy states: “unless a connection is shown by times printed in light type, you should generally allow a minimum of five minutes between arrival and departure”.
- .5 Instead of this we propose: “A recognised connection is one where the time between arrival at and departure from the interchange station is at least five minutes. At some interchanges, connections in less than five minutes are possible while at others the station layout is such that more than five minutes are needed: in both cases, minimum interchange times in minutes (e.g.: “3” in a block) are shown against the station name.”
- .6 We think also that a revised policy on holding connections is needed to increase passengers’ confidence in the system.
- .7 The existing policy says: “connections between trains cannot be guaranteed. To delay one train to await... a late-running train... may cause significant disruption to many other customers when they make connections at other stations along the route. Every endeavor is made to minimise the total disruption and special attention is given to services operating infrequently and the last services each day.”
- .8 The current regulatory regime under which the TOCs operate imposes financial penalties on them when their trains run late. Although at first sight this may seem to work in passengers’ interests, in fact it provides an incentive not to hold connecting services, especially where the onward connection is provided by a different company from that whose service has been delayed. A solution to this must be found - for example that any penalty is paid wholly by the late-running company rather than by the company which holds a connecting service. We recognise that the needs of people already on trains or waiting along the route are very important, but the present system needs to give greater attention to the needs of passengers trying to connect into a service.
- .9 Therefore we suggest a revised policy:-

- “all trains will wait up to five minutes for late-running connecting services. They will not normally be held for longer than this because of inconvenience to passengers already on board or waiting at stations further along the route. Exceptions may be made where the connecting train is the last service of the day on a particular route. However, every effort will be made to avoid delaying the last train of the day by more than 20 minutes by providing alternative transport for passengers who need to connect into that service;
- at all times of the day, every effort will be made to enable passengers to complete their intended journeys to their final destinations. This does not mean to the final rail station, but to the final ticketed destination. Where necessary, an alternative mode of transport will be provided at the TOC’s expense to enable the complete ticketed journey to be completed as punctually as possible;
- if as a result of a connection not being made, a passenger misses his / her last train / bus of the day, the TOC which operates this last train guarantees to provide either alternative transport to enable the passenger to complete his / her full ticketed journey that day or, in the event of severe disruption to services (for example as a result of exceptional weather conditions), to arrange overnight accommodation;
- if the passenger’s arrival at his / her final ticketed destination is delayed by 30 to 59 minutes, a refund of 50% of the cost of the complete single journey will be payable. For delays of 60 minutes or more, the refund will be 100%.” (The principle of *force majeure* is accepted here, i.e. compensation will not be payable for delays wholly outside the rail industry’s control, such as vandalism - including bridge strikes by road vehicles - terrorism, extreme weather conditions etc.)

.10 Nevertheless the aim must be to operate trains on time so that connections are made. This, with the improved service frequencies proposed in this document, requires a much more robust and reliable rail infrastructure than currently exists on the UK rail network. That this is achievable, given the will, is shown by reference to countries such as Japan and Switzerland, where high-density services operate to very high punctuality standards.

### 4.2.3 Through ticketing

- .1 As we have made clear already, rail should be seen as one element in a complete journey. Where a journey involves use of more than one mode of public transport, the concept of the ‘seamless journey’ demands a system of through ticketing between the various modes.
- .2 The Wales and Borders area currently has over 60 rail - bus through ticketing schemes, so in this respect Wales compares favourably with most other areas of the UK. 25 of these schemes are ‘PlusBus’ and these cover all the major conurbations along the south Wales main line corridor and the north Wales coast. This means that, in theory at least, more than half the households in Wales have seamless ticketing available from their local bus stop to any rail destination (or other PlusBus destination) in Britain.
- .3 Unfortunately there are major disincentives to the widespread use of PlusBus:
- lack of public awareness;
  - the need to purchase tickets in advance at a station (or by other means), with

no possibility of purchase on the bus;

- pricing and conditions applied by PlusBus: in some cases separate purchase of the bus fare to the station is cheaper than the PlusBus through ticket (which is priced on the basis of a day's unlimited bus travel in the specified zone);
- the large number of schemes in Wales has given rise to overlapping and confusion. Cardiff, Ruabon, Caerphilly and Aberdare each have two (or even three) through ticketing options, which is bewildering to users as each scheme has a different price and terms of validity;
- major shortcomings in the benefits of through ticketing arise from the complexity of the bus industry, and especially changes of operator when local authority supported services are re-tendered (for example, the consequent withdrawal of through ticketing to Usk, Raglan and Monmouth);
- confusion caused by ambiguity or lack of clarity on areas of validity and acceptance on tendered services.

.4 We believe that this situation is unacceptable, yet when viewed along with the successful Wales FlexiPass range of tickets, Wales should be seen as a leader in the realm of through tickets. Clear information, a sensible approach and protection of schemes by local authorities are essential. In addition, the SRA should work towards improving the system when awarding and reviewing franchises.

.5 There are various ways in which the present situation can be improved, including:-

- the development of 'smart card' technology so that payment for travel is made in the most efficient way possible. This is particularly important on buses, where the vast majority of vehicles are driver-only operated and delays caused by fare collection can cause the bus to become later and later after every stop;
- greater use of multi-modal passes, such as the London Travel card and Cardiff Capital Card: these should be available in every area of the country, for both peak and off-peak travel;
- ticket agencies should be appointed in every town or large village, so that complicated tickets can be sold before the passenger boards a driver-only bus;
- in the case of air / rail fares, the air fare could have an optional add-on covering rail (or bus) travel within a reasonable catchment area of the airport concerned.

#### 4.2.4 Interchanges

.1 If people are to be persuaded to use public transport to make journeys involving one or more changes between services, it is vital that those changes are made as straightforward and reliable as possible. No longer can it be thought good enough to leave a passenger on a cold, deserted, unstaffed station with no access to information as to whether his / her onward connection is on time, late or canceled, and if the latter, what alternative arrangements are being made. These considerations apply equally whether the forward connection is by another train or by a bus, and the latter includes cases where a temporary change to / from a bus is needed because of engineering works on the railway.

.2 So far as physical resources are concerned, at every interchange station there must of course be all the facilities which we see as necessary for all stations as a basic minimum. However, in addition interchanges must have on duty (throughout the period of the day when connections are possible there) a 'despatcher' who will be responsible for:-

- seeing that connections (rail or bus) are held in accordance with national policy;

- making arrangements for onward travel when connections are missed (thus relieving pressure on central control offices and providing local knowledge of, for example, road routes to stations to be served by replacement buses or taxis);
- providing reassurance to passengers about alternative arrangements in the event of disruption;
- providing reassurance to passengers about their personal security;
- supervising or providing basic refreshment facilities;
- supervising toilet facilities.

.3 It is also essential that all public transport drivers are provided with radios or mobile phones and are required as part of their duties to inform interchange points on their routes of any delays which might require connections to be held or alternative arrangements to be made.

### 4.3 Station facilities

.1 The aim here is to enhance existing facilities and set national / regional standards in order to encourage the use of rail transport. An important aspect of this is to improve the actual and perceived safety and security of passengers.

.2 Every railway station must have (in no particular order):-

- bilingual signs / information posters;
- a notice board reserved for (at least) a weekly update on planned disruptions to services (eg. for engineering work) and alternative arrangements which may be relevant to passengers at that station. 'Relevant' means on that station's line of route and also affecting connecting services from interchanges on that line. The engineering work notice boards must be reserved for that specific use, and when there is no engineering work to be announced they should carry messages to that effect;
- covered waiting accommodation;
- real time train running information;
- a means by which a waiting passenger can speak directly to a member of staff when problems arise;
- an accessible public telephone adjacent to the station platform, because it will be many years before all rail passengers have mobile phones. In any case, the station may be situated where mobile phone coverage is poor or non-existent. Moreover it is not sufficient to have information about a train being late or cancelled: often the passenger will need then to contact someone at the other end of his / her journey to let them know what is happening;
- secure cycle accommodation;
- adequate lighting (including on the station approach road / path and positioned such that all notice boards can be read);
- at unstaffed stations, CCTV supervision of platforms (as is the case at many stations in urban areas already) to protect passengers and facilities;
- current timetable posters;
- effective cleaning of the station.

.3 Interchange stations (rail / rail and rail / other modes (see Para. 4.2.4) must have:-

- a 'despatcher' on duty for the whole period of the day when connections are possible at that station;
- toilet facilities, including provision for the disabled;
- at least basic refreshment facilities, even if this amounts to no more than snacks

/ drinks machines: these are commonly provided even at local stations in such countries as Switzerland;

These facilities must be available throughout the period in which the train service is operating.

- .4 In addition, stations of appropriate importance must have:-
- a ticket and enquiry office;
  - ticket machines (to relieve pressure on ticket windows);
  - a secure car park;
  - a higher standard of refreshment facilities;
  - enhanced waiting accommodation (eg heated and with a higher standard of seating than at unstaffed stations).

## 4.4 On-train standards

### 4.4.1 General principles

- .1 The aim should be to provide rolling stock which is of as high a standard as possible, as this will be a very important factor in attracting people from their cars to the use of rail transport.
- .2 Trains should be clean, including seats, windows, floors and toilets. Trains should be cleaned before each journey, and on longer journeys (two hours or more) basic cleaning should be undertaken by the train crew (which could include travelling cleaners where necessary).
- .3 Trains should be designed with passengers' legitimate needs in mind, including:-
- adequate provision for luggage (including rucksacks), cycles, push chairs, and wheelchairs;
  - adequate visibility: seats should not be positioned so that the view is obstructed by the bodywork of the coach;
  - seats which are not so high as to restrict the average passenger's vision to the front and rear;
  - adequate distances between seats, so that passengers of greater than average height and / or girth can sit facing forwards in comfort.
- .4 There should be a high standard of on-train information, including:-
- dot matrix screens giving "next stop" and other relevant information;
  - a public address system capable of being operated by the driver when operational problems arise, since he / she is more likely than the conductor to know what is happening;
  - clear, detailed announcements when an interchange station is reached: in Germany it is normal practice for the conductor to give a list of connections, including departure times and platform numbers. This does sometimes happen here, but it is far from being a standard practice, and seemingly depends on the diligence of individual conductors;
  - the conductor must be able to give full information about all connecting services, including those by other modes of transport.
- .5 Air conditioning should be standard: windows which can be opened, thus spreading cold air to the whole of a carriage, must become a thing of the past.

- .6 External doors which, as on some London Transport trains and on Central Trains class 170 units, close automatically after a set time, are useful in cold or wet weather.
- .7 Refreshment facilities, including snacks / drinks machines in place of (or in addition to) staffed facilities, should be available on any service where the end-to-end journey time is more than two hours.

#### **4.4.2 Better trains for Wales and the Borders**

- .1 A wide variety of types of trains (referred to here as ‘rolling stock’) is used on the services covered by this document. Compliance with the general principles outlined above is variable, and this gives rise to several specific issues which need to be tackled if the railway is to realise its full potential.
- .2 The notion of ‘fitness for purpose’ (from the passenger viewpoint) must be a prime consideration in allocating rolling stock to specific services, be it new build or cascades from elsewhere. It should be remembered that even ‘basic’ family cars (the railway’s main competitor) have features and degrees of comfort undreamed of a decade ago. This must be heeded when new trains are designed; unfortunately this has not always been the case hitherto.
- .3 Using the ‘fitness for purpose’ principle, it is readily apparent that the design requirements for trains used for local, relatively short distance services (such as the Valley lines network) differ fundamentally from those for long distance inter-urban routes. The former need high capacity, limited luggage space and means of rapid disembarking and embarking. The latter need to be more spacious with more comfortable seating and other facilities. Noise levels and general ambiance are also important factors in persuading people to use the trains.
- .4 The High Speed Trains (HSTs) used on London - south Wales services have proved themselves over 30 years to be one of the best train designs of the 20th century, but their replacement will be needed within the next decade. It is essential that the replacement design incorporates improvements in quality and comfort. This certainly precludes a ‘distributed diesel power’ (i.e. a diesel engine under every coach) solution, such as that adopted in the trains known as “Adelantes” and “Voyagers”. It must be remembered that railway rolling stock has a much longer working life than any road vehicle; it is also longer than any operating franchise which has yet been awarded.
- .5 The ATW fleet is mostly in mid-life and replacements will need to be considered before the end of the franchise period. Most services are operated by one- or two-car diesel trains of 1980s design. That they were built as such arises from government insistence that in the former Regional Railways sector, only two new coaches would be built for every three coaches scrapped. These trains (particularly the class 158s - see below) played a major role in the late 1980s / early 1990s period in growing the business on many routes through the principle of running shorter trains at more frequent intervals. But they have tended to be victims of their own success, and now overcrowding is often encountered. In future therefore, new build must allow for traffic growth, which means usually being of more than two cars. It may then be appropriate to include some first class seating on trains intended for longer journeys. Nevertheless, new stock must be technically compatible with existing designs, i.e. they must be able to couple together if /

<b>Train designation</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Current use</b>	<b>Cascade implications</b>
143 / 144 'Pacer'	Two 4-wheel coaches, based on bus design. Basic accommodation; low capacity	Local services such as Valley lines, but also (inappropriately) some longer journeys	Should be first to be withdrawn. Replace with cl. 150 and / or 156
150 'Sprinter'	Two bogie coaches with wide doors and vestibules, limited luggage space, no air conditioning	Mostly short / medium distance services, but also sometimes on long distance routes for which they are unsuitable	Confine to short distance, such as Valley lines; otherwise replace with cl. 156 or 158
153	Single coach units. High windows, cramped layout	Lightly loaded services regardless of length of journey	Confine to shorter branch lines. Otherwise replace with cl. 156 or 158
156	Two coach units. Larger, improved version of 150 with better facilities, but not air-conditioned	None in Wales at present	If / when available, could replace classes 143 / 4, 150 and 153 on medium-distance services
158	Two coach air-conditioned units (which can be re-formed into 3-coach units)	The mainstay of the inter-urban network	Should be retained when full fleet of 175s is received, to relieve overcrowding, allow for service enhancements and for replacement of inferior units such as classes 150, 153.
175 'Coradia'	Fleet contains both two car and three car units. Modern design of diesel train with good passenger facilities	Services along the north Wales main line, and in northern England	Full fleet to ATW in 2006

**Table 2**

when needed.

- .6 It is very disappointing that ATW's franchise does not allow for any new rolling stock, or even any refurbishment of existing trains (though much refurbishment was completed by ATW's predecessors). It is accepted that the full fleet of relatively new class 175 trains (already in use in north Wales) will be allocated to ATW from 2006, when they are displaced by new trains in northern England. Until then, south and mid Wales, possibly uniquely in Britain, will continue to be served almost exclusively by pre-privatisation rolling stock.
- .7 In the absence of new trains being built, recourse needs to be made to the 'cascading' principle, whereby trains made redundant through introduction of new stock elsewhere are cascaded to ATW, which in turn would allow the less satisfactory trains to be withdrawn. Allowance must also be made for the service enhancements envisaged in this document, which will need more trains than those currently allocated to ATW. Table 2 outlines how this could work. Units of classes 156 and 158 are likely to become available from other franchises (such as Scotrail and Trans Pennine Express) because they are to receive new trains. Although in mid-life, they offer a higher standard of passenger accommodation than classes 143/4, 150 and 153.
- .8 Another cascade possibility is to use locomotives and coaches which have been displaced from 'inter-city' routes by new trains. This has happened to a limited extent in some areas, including on the Rhymney Valley line (where these trains are due to be replaced with class 150s).
- .9 It must be doubted whether any of the available designs listed in the table are suitable for rural lines, especially lines with high tourist potential. Few of them offer good views out of the window when traversing scenic routes (of which Wales has many), with classes 150 and 153 being particularly poor in this respect. The solution is to follow Germany's example and design and build trains specifically aimed at this type of service: we believe that this should happen as a matter of urgency.
- .10 Another innovation which could be 'imported' from Germany and France is the 'tram-train', a light rail vehicle which is dual-powered, i.e. with both electric and diesel-electric drives. These vehicles can run on electrified routes in and around city centres and can then continue, under diesel power, out to the suburbs on non-electrified railways. They are being introduced in Kassel, Germany, where they will link the inner city tram network with the regional railway network serving the suburbs, and so offer 'seamless' journeys. A similar operation is planned in France. The concept has potential in two areas in Wales:-
  - the LRT proposals for Cardiff (section 4.1.2.8) could result in an electrified city section but with tram-trains continuing over parts of the existing Valley lines which are not electrified;
  - section 4.1.2.16 on Wrexham - Bidston - Liverpool envisages electrification at least as far south as Woodchurch, and preferably to Wrexham. In the former case, use of the tram-train concept could offer an attractive solution, avoiding the need for passengers to change trains at Woodchurch.

## 4.5 Information for passengers

### 4.5.1 Introduction

- .1 Although there have been some improvements in rail service information in Wales and the Borders since privatisation, a large gap remains to be bridged in terms of making potential customers aware of public transport timetables, facilities and fares. Our foregoing proposals for service enhancements will not succeed in attracting greater usage unless this information deficit is addressed.
- .2 We have already touched upon some aspects of passenger information in earlier sections of this Plan, such as:-
- higher standards of on-train information;
  - improvement of the facilities to be provided at stations;
  - the appointment of ticket agents in many more towns and villages than at present.

### 4.5.2 Ways in which information could be further improved

- .1 Public transport timetables and details of fares should be much more widely available away from stations and bus stops, for example in all post offices, public libraries, council offices, tourist information centres etc.
- .2 Operators should be obliged to include adequate information about connecting services (including by other modes of transport) in their timetables and to include details of other operators' services which run on the same route.
- .3 Bus operators should be required to include expiry dates on their timetables, instead of the all too frequent "until further notice": this would bring them into line with long-established practice on the railways.
- .4 We welcome government plans for a "one stop shop" public transport enquiry service, taking over the functions of the existing National Rail Enquiry Service (NRES), local authorities' enquiry lines and operators' own enquiry services. This is essential if the concept of the 'seamless journey' is to be achieved. However, although NRES is supposed to be capable of giving detailed advice about any part of the network, this is often not the case. So we believe that the new system should have a regional network of call centres (with discrete telephone numbers) to make it more likely that adequate local / regional knowledge is available, with staff seeking advice from other regions where necessary. In Wales the service should be bilingual. All telephone numbers should be 'Lo-call'.
- .5 Local authorities have a statutory duty to publish public transport maps and timetables for their areas. Present practice in Wales ranges from the excellent to the abysmal: clearly all authorities should be required to work to standards based on current best practices. Consistency between operators and the local authorities in the ways in which timetable information is presented is particularly desirable, to avoid confusing passengers as they travel between areas and / or use different transport modes. Responsibility for achieving this should rest with the consortia of local authorities (SEWTA, SWWITCH etc). WAG should co-ordinate the work to ensure that uniformly high standards apply throughout Wales.
- .6 Operators must be required to provide adequate information about planned disruptions to services well in advance of the relevant dates: this must be clearly

displayed at all stations and passed to the enquiry service and the media.

- .7 The availability of information, including ‘real time’ train running data, on the internet makes a useful contribution, especially with widening access to computer terminals, such as in public libraries etc.
- .8 Scope exists for displaying additional information in trains, particularly that referring to special services, special offers etc.

## 4.6 Marketing

### 4.6.1 Introduction

- .1 *Railfuture Wales* believes that TOCs in Wales (and in the UK as a whole) are not exploiting significant marketing opportunities. It is true that use of the rail network has been increasing, but factors such as the state of the economy, road congestion, rising house prices (which can lengthen journeys to work) etc. probably lie behind this. The improved services which we postulate here will certainly need effective marketing if they are to be successful. Here we offer some general principles rather than going into great detail about opportunities to promote particular routes.

### 4.6.2 General principles

- .1 There should be promotion of the ‘seamless journey’ concept as between operators and different transport modes (see Section 4.2).
- .2 A railcard for the 26 - 59 age group should be introduced. This is not currently provided for unless Family or Forces rail cards can be used. Germany’s national ‘Bahn Card’ is a good example of what might be done in the UK.
- .3 Senior citizens resident in Wales are entitled to a bus pass which allows unlimited free travel on buses. Concessions should be extended to train travel if they are considered appropriate for bus travel.
- .4 The present highly complicated rail fare “structure” should be simplified so that prospective passengers (and staff!) can understand it. Some issues here include:-
  - fares in Britain are among the highest in Europe and also vary very widely for comparable journeys in different areas;
  - if modal shift from cars is to be achieved, some relationship to perceived motoring costs is necessary;
  - affordable walk-on fares should apply throughout the day, possibly discounted for evening travel;
  - where time restrictions must be retained, they should be based on time of arrival at a major destination (e.g. London), and not, as now, on time of departure from originating station; this arrangement penalises those living furthest away;
  - day return fares should be available for all journeys which can reasonably be accomplished within a day, and not confined, as now, by mileage;
  - advance purchase tickets (which require both outward and return trains to be specified at time of booking) may have a place for those passengers both able and willing to plan their journeys in detail far in advance, but their existence does not remove the need for affordable walk-on fares. Car drivers of course have unlimited flexibility about times to travel, routes to take etc. It should be

remembered that improved service frequencies such as we advocate could lose some of their appeal if journeys have to be booked in advance without the flexibility for change, particularly for the return leg;

- there should also be a presumption against TOC-specific tickets (i.e. tickets which can be used only on trains operated by one particular TOC). These erode the network effect of the rail system and can cause inconvenience to passengers, especially when things go wrong and connections are missed.

- .5 The present practice of charging higher fares at holiday times (such as Christmas) when the most disruptive engineering work takes place is another example of the railway industry shooting itself in the foot and must cease - why should rail passengers be charged more to travel when the service is at its worst? Resentment does not lead to positive attitudes to future use of rail.
- .6 Discounted season tickets should be offered to businesses with premises within easy reach of railway stations. They could sell them on to their employees at a smaller discount (to cover costs and allow a small return to the company), but still at a lower rate than the 'at station' price. This has potential to be a significant part of Green Transport Plans, which employers are being urged to adopt and promote
- .7 There is plenty of scope to revive the rail excursion train market, whether the TOCs operate such trains themselves or contract them to specialised companies. We believe that people who travel on such trains very often do not use the regular train service on their local line. If they can be persuaded to go on an excursion, they can be given all sorts of literature about ordinary services and their addresses added to the local TOC's database for future timetable etc. distribution. This would help to make the railway part of people's lives, which unfortunately it has ceased to be in some areas. It could trigger a virtuous cycle of greater awareness of what the railway has to offer, hence more use of regular services all the year round.
- .8 A particular issue is how the railway caters for special events, and the need to do so without disrupting the journeys of ordinary travelers. Some events are fixed by date and location (e.g. the Royal Welsh Show), some fixed by date but variable in location (e.g. the National Eisteddfod), and some fixed by location but on variable dates (e.g. events at the Millennium Stadium, Cardiff). To cater adequately for such events, and to encourage people to use public transport to reach them:-
- it is essential that the relevant TOCs are involved in advance planning, along with the event organisers and other stockholders (including bus operators where appropriate);
  - great care is needed to ensure that advance publicity gives prominence to the rail services to be offered;
  - a pool of rolling stock must be available for special events. To some extent this is catered for by private companies which own trains that can be hired. The opportunities could be expanded if the ROSCOs (Rolling Stock Leasing Companies) adopted a policy of short-term leasing of spare stock (which certainly exists, unused at present). The latter is a UK-wide issue, not specific to Wales, and is one for the industry and its regulators to sort out.
  - spare rolling stock for special events could also be used at other times to provide additional accommodation on (for example) scenic routes in high summer. It would also be available for excursion trains (see para. 7 above). This would spread the costs of additional rolling stock across several worthwhile activities, when individually they might not be able to justify it.

## 5 Freight services

### 5.1 Introduction

- .1 The environmental benefits of increasing rail freight's market share are increasingly recognised by all except vested interests. Therefore any moves designed to encourage modal shift here are likely to command widespread popular support - not least from other road users. Indeed, opinion polls have consistently shown this to be the case, with many people believing that a prime purpose of the railways is to move heavy goods around. Some gains have been made, but the potential for winning further traffic to rail is enormous.

### 5.2 Strategies for development

- .1 Rail freight terminals should be established at those ports which do not currently have them, including particularly the Irish Sea ports.
- .2 A network of mini-terminals should be created at 20 - 30 mile intervals along most rail routes, to give complete regional coverage - although of course this would have to be part of a UK-wide initiative to be of great use. Experience suggests that very little infrastructure work may be needed. For example at Pontrilas (between Abergavenny and Hereford), timber has been unloaded from rail wagons in a single siding/loop line, simply by bringing a crane alongside the wagons. Another possibility is for the crane to be part of the wagon. Mini-terminals will need an area of hard standing alongside the rail track(s). On lines which are little used at night, it would be possible to load / unload some types of traffic directly on / off a train which is standing on the main running line: this has been done in Scotland. In addition to the ports and existing freight terminals, mini-terminals might be placed (for example) at Carmarthen, Llandovery, Llandrindod, Bridgend, Shrewsbury, Newtown, Aberystwyth, Wrexham, Llandudno Junction, Bangor, Blaenau Ffestiniog, Aberdare and Rhymney.
- .3 A very important initiative is the development of a self-contained diesel train for freight traffic - the freight equivalent of the passenger 'diesel multiple unit'. This 'freight DMU' has a cab at each end to give directional flexibility and consists of the cab wagons with under-floor engines plus several intermediate wagons, the number depending on the power available and the traffic on offer. Several such units could be coupled together, as happens with passenger trains. Containers of various shapes and sizes can be carried: these could be lifted on and off very easily, as described in the previous paragraph. Non-container traffic could also be carried. We envisage freight DMUs being coupled to passenger units when necessary, for example to improve line occupation or reduce train crew costs. In Britain, the Royal Mail has used freight multiple units in fixed formations dedicated to mail traffic, while Network Rail has recently purchased 'multi-purpose vehicles', which currently run as two wagon units: they are to be assessed for commercial freight traffic. The German *CargoSprinter* has also been tested in two different versions.
- .4 The proximity of rail facilities should be taken into account by planning authorities when determining applications to construct new industrial facilities.
- .5 Equally, there should be a clear presumption that sensitively planned and de-

signed rail freight developments will be given planning permission in support of regional / national transport policy.

- .6 Everything possible should be done to increase awareness of the availability of freight facilities grants and consideration should be given to extending financial assistance to new freight flows by rail. This might include encouraging major consumers to receive supplies by rail, such as persuading supermarkets to use more localised distribution centres than is the case at present. A train already operates between Glasgow and Inverness for such traffic. The freight DMU and mini-terminal concepts could also be very relevant here.
- .7 The London - Severn Tunnel - Fishguard and Chester - Holyhead lines should be made capable of taking freight wagons of European ('Bern gauge') dimensions, so that freight traffic to / from south Wales and Ireland via the Channel Tunnel can be developed more economically.
- .8 In particular, there might then be scope for introducing a British / Irish equivalent of the 'rolling motorway' trains which operate in some parts of Europe. Lorries complete with their cab units are conveyed on rail wagons, with passenger coaches (which could include couches) attached for use by their drivers. This allows the same driver to stay with the load throughout and deliver it via local roads at the end of the train journey. The environmental benefit from taking large numbers of lorries by rail instead of by road for most of each journey is clear.
- .9 Some encouraging recent developments have included regular conveyance of parcels traffic between England and the north of Scotland, and use of rail by some supermarket companies as part of their distribution network (as mentioned above). Scope exists for expansion of this type of traffic. In addition we feel that rail freight should be able to win other types of traffic, given appropriate support. These include:-
  - military traffic. The government should insist that rail is used where possible.
  - aggregates. The proposal to upgrade the Conwy Valley line to remove slate waste should be pursued with vigor;
  - short-haul freight, for example between steelworks (this is already happening to some extent);
  - inter-station parcels traffic. This has been largely given up by the railways, partly for historical organisational reasons, but we see no reason why a fleet of diesel parcels vans could not operate between staffed interchange points, attached to passenger trains as far as possible but able to move under their own power. The class 153 units (see section 4.4.2) could possibly be converted for this use when replaced by improved passenger trains;
  - smaller consignments, in palletised loads. The FreightBus concept (a service for small consignments in palletised loads) is a new initiative in this regard, needing relatively inexpensive equipment for loading / unloading, and could be of promising application in Wales and the Borders.

## 6 Infrastructure

### 6.1 Introduction

- .1 This section looks at what physical improvements are needed to allow the implementation of some of the proposals in this Plan. Some of the work listed is at locations in England, because inadequate infrastructure at such places impacts directly on rail operations in Wales.
- .2 The installation of continuously-welded rail (cwr) on all lines should be completed to give improved ride quality and lower maintenance costs.

### 6.2 Resignalling

- .1 Resignalling and other upgrades should take account of present *and future* needs, and avoid past mistakes of over-zealous rationalisation. In particular:-
  - signalling must be adequate to allow prompt departure of trains from platforms;
  - on single lines, the control system must avoid excessive delays at passing places while ‘tokens’ are being obtained. The experimental system to be installed on the Cambrian line should represent an advance in this respect;
  - as a general principle, and not exceptionally, signalling at main stations must allow a train to be admitted to a platform already occupied by another train. Without this flexibility, it may not be possible to cater for increased services in some cases, particularly when out-of-course running occurs.
- .2 Despite rationalisation over the years, there remain a significant number of elderly, manually-operated signal boxes in Wales, particularly north of Newport, west of Swansea and in north Wales. In addition, the more modern signalling operated from signalling centres at Port Talbot, Cardiff and Newport is out of date compared to more recent computerised systems elsewhere on the network.
- .3 Where manually-operated signalling is to remain for some time, use of ‘intermediate block’ signals will be needed in appropriate locations, to cope with the higher service frequencies which we envisage.
- .4 Therefore Network Rail will need to invest in an upgraded signalling system in Wales, whether or not our proposals are implemented. Any such system will improve reliability, but it must also enhance existing line capacity, especially where congestion is greatest - between Cardiff and Port Talbot and on the suburban routes near to Cardiff. It must also include sufficient spare capacity to allow for future expansion.

### 6.3 New lines and additional tracks / connections

#### 6.3.1 Protection of land for rail use

- .1 It is essential that local planning authorities identify and protect from other developments land in their areas which may be needed for future rail schemes. If this is not done, some of the proposals which we and others have made for new or reopened lines and stations may become much more difficult or even impossible to implement.

### **6.3.2 Route by route requirements**

- .1 The work needed is outlined on a 'route by route' basis. The list is not necessarily exhaustive: it reflects what seems to us to be necessary, from the standpoint of interested observers and users of railways who have reasonably extensive knowledge of how the system works. However, rail professionals obviously would need to give more detailed advice on the infrastructure works required to implement this Plan.

#### **6.3.2.1 Marches line**

- .1 Extra (or re-commissioned) loops to allow freight trains to be recessed for passenger trains to overtake them might well prove necessary on this route. Some existing loops might also need to be extended to allow them to hold longer freight trains.
- .2 At Hereford station, signalling is needed to allow a train from the south to enter the northbound platform when a train is already standing there. The flexibility of the layout could be improved by instituting bi-directional running from Shelwick Junction into the station, allowing trains from Worcester etc. to run directly into the bay platform.
- .3 For Craven Arms see also the Heart of Wales line.

#### **6.3.2.2 Ebbw Valley lines**

- .1 We welcome the intention, as part of the Ebbw Vale railway reopening, to install a lengthy section (Lime Kiln Crossing to Aberbeeg) of double track on this route, as this will result in greater operational flexibility than would a series of passing loops.
- .2 The line between Aberbeeg and Abertillery would need to be reinstated: a single track would be sufficient here.

#### **6.3.2.3 Cardiff Valley lines**

- .1 It would be necessary to provide one or more passing loops, or to restore double track for part or all of the distance between Abercynon and Merthyr, so that our plan for a half hourly service could be implemented.
- .2 An additional passing loop has been installed at Mountain Ash, but extension of the service to Hirwaun could well require a further loop in this valley.
- .3 We understand that plans to restore the fourth platform at Cardiff Queen Street and improve the junction between the Pontypridd and Rhymney lines at the north end of the station have been put on hold. This work is essential if the layout is to be able to cope with the increased frequencies which we are suggesting.

#### **6.3.2.4 Maesteg line**

- .1 A new passing loop will be needed between Bridgend and Maesteg, probably north of Tondy, to enable a half-hourly service to operate.

### 6.3.2.5 South and west Wales lines

- .1 **Heathrow Airport junction:** installation of a west-facing junction here, together with electrification from Heathrow junction to Reading, would allow Heathrow Express services to operate from Paddington to the airport and on to Reading, where they could connect with services to south Wales. This would remove the need to catch the Airport to Reading coach or to go first to Paddington on the Heathrow Express before being able to head for south Wales. In the longer term, electrification of the main line to Swansea should be considered. This, together with the works just outlined, would enable Paddington to Swansea trains to run via the airport, as well as offering other benefits of electrification (among them the fact that electricity can be generated from renewable resources).
- .2 **Swindon to Kemble:** double track should be restored so that south Wales to London trains which are diverted via Gloucester (eg. when the Severn Tunnel is closed) are not held up waiting to enter the existing single line section.
- .3 **Filton Junction (near Bristol Parkway):** we are pleased that restoration of double track at this point on the Bristol Temple Meads to south Wales route has been completed.
- .4 **Newport:** the already flexible layout here should be retained and further enhanced by bringing platform 4 into regular use (including inter alia, for Ebbw Vale trains); signalling platform 2 such that two trains can use it simultaneously; and signalling platform 1 such that trains can come to a halt opposite the station entrance.
- .5 **Cardiff Central:** constraints on the layout here would need to be tackled, particularly to reduce conflicting movements between passenger and freight trains at the eastern end of the station. Crossovers half way along platforms 1, 2 and 3 would increase flexibility.
- .6 **Bridgend:** substantial work would be needed here to make possible the passenger service levels which we advocate:-
  - the junction between the main line and the Vale of Glamorgan line at the eastern end of the station would need to be restored to double track;
  - a new through up platform is desirable to cope with the additional services which we propose, and allow local trains to connect into and out of long-distance services;
  - at the west end of the station, the junction between the main line and the Maesteg line should have double track restored.
- .7 **Bridgend to Tondy and Margam:** This route should be retained for diversionary purposes.
- .8 **Port Talbot:** The existing two platforms could be expanded to four, using existing tracks outside the main lines. This would allow connections and fast trains to overtake slower trains as advocated for Bridgend. In an ideal world, the platforms would be islands, to allow easy interchange, but this would be much more expensive to achieve as it would require complete rebuilding of the station.
- .9 **Port Talbot to Briton Ferry:** if it were possible to install relief lines between these points, giving two through lines in each direction, congestion would be less likely to occur.

- .10 **Swansea Loop East Junction:** restoration of double track here, just north of High Street Station would greatly improve the flexibility of the layout and would reduce significantly delays to trains on the west Wales and Heart of Wales lines. At present, they often have to wait at the junction for main line trains to enter or leave Swansea before they can gain access to the station.
- .11 **Cockett (west of Swansea) to Dyffryn (east of Llanelli):** this section of route needs to be restored to double track so that timetabling of trains is made easier and delays caused by late-running services are reduced.
- .12 **Carmarthen:** at present the approaches to the station from both the Swansea and Whitland directions are single track only. If these short stretches were restored to double line, potentially significant timetabling constraints would be removed.
- .13 **Templeton (between Narberth and Kilgetty):** the former passing loop here should be restored, so that the long single line section between Whitland and Tenby would be broken up, once again making timetabling and recovery from late-running easier.
- .14 **Clarbeston Road to Haverfordwest:** this section of single track should be restored to double line working, particularly as we advocate an hourly interval service to Milford Haven.

#### 6.3.2.6 Heart of Wales line

- .1 Capacity should be increased between Swansea and Llanelli (see above).
- .2 A single line of track would need to be reinstated between Gowerton and Grovesend, possibly with a passing loop at Gorseinon.
- .3 In order to allow the line to be used more easily for freight diversions when the south Wales or Marches lines are closed for engineering work, the existing passing loops at Llandeilo, Llandovery, Llanwrtyd, Llandrindod and Knighton may need to be extended to accommodate longer freight trains.
- .4 To allow a two-hourly interval passenger service with good connections with other services to be timetabled, additional passing loops should be installed, possibly at Llanbister Road or Llangynllo and at Pantyffynnon.
- .5 At Craven Arms, track should be laid on the west side of the existing 'up' line platform to create a third platform line and freight loop with access to / from the Heart of Wales and Marches lines. So far as the Heart of Wales line is concerned, this would make it easier for trains from the north to wait for late-running services from the Hereford direction without obstructing the Marches line. It would also make it easier to deal with freight trains or excursions arriving from Hereford and needing to travel towards Knighton.

#### 6.3.2.7 Aberystwyth and Pwllheli - Shrewsbury

- .1 One or more additional passing loops should be installed on the line between Shrewsbury and Aberystwyth, to enable an hourly service to be operated reliably.

#### 6.3.2.8 Shrewsbury

- .1 To enable this station to fulfil its function as an interchange between many routes,

crossovers are needed halfway along the two main platforms (4 and 7) to increase the flexibility of the layout.

#### **6.3.2.9 Shrewsbury to Chester**

- .1 Re-doubling of all or most of the single-track section between Saltney and Wrexham should be effected.
- .2 Intermediate block signals (see 6.2.2) would be needed between Gobowen and Croes Newydd to cope with the increased service frequency which we advocate.
- .3 A new junction with the reopened Llangollen Railway would be required at Ruabon, including restoration of the northbound 'island' platform there.

#### **6.3.2.10 Holyhead / Caernarfon / Llangefni to Chester**

- .1 The line to Caernarfon should be rebuilt as a single track, diverging from the existing route at Menai Bridge.
- .2 The single line between Gaerwen and Llangefni should be brought up to passenger train standards.
- .3 The signal box at Ty Croes should be restored to use to break the existing long block section between Gaerwen and Valley, pending resignalling of the Chester / Holyhead line.
- .4 The north Wales main line is still manually signalled and some intermediate block signals may be needed to enable the proposed increased services to operate reliably. As above, this would be a temporary measure, pending full resignalling.

#### **6.3.2.11 Wrexham to Bidston / Liverpool**

- .1 As already mentioned (4.1.2.15), we consider that this route should be electrified from Bidston southwards, at least as far as Woodchurch and preferably to Wrexham.

### **6.3.3 New and reopened stations and mini-freight terminals**

- .1 This section summarises, again on a line by line basis, our proposals for additional stations and mini-freight terminals. The latter are in addition to existing, more conventional freight terminals, such as those at Fishguard and Holyhead.

#### **6.3.3.1 Marches line**

- **New stations:** Caerleon, Pontrilas.

#### **6.3.3.2 Chepstow line**

- **New station:** Magor.

#### **6.3.3.3 Ebbw Valley lines**

- **New stations:** Ebbw Vale Parkway, Llanhilleth, Newbridge, Crosskeys, Risca and Rogerstone are due to open at stage 1 of the scheme. We believe this should be followed as quickly as possible by stage 2, which would include stations at Ebbw Vale Centre, Cwm, Abertillery and Pye Corner (Bassaleg).

**6.3.3.4 Cardiff Valley lines**

- **New stations:** Nelson, Treharris, Hirwaun.
- **New freight mini-terminals:** Aberdare, Rhymney.

**6.3.3.5 Vale of Glamorgan Line**

- **New stations:** Rhoose (for Cardiff International Airport), Gileston / St. Athan, Llantwit Major.
- **New freight mini-terminals:** Barry Docks, Aberthaw.

**6.3.3.6 Maesteg line**

- **New station:** Llangynwyd.

**6.3.3.7 South and west Wales lines**

- **New stations east of Cardiff:** Celtic Lakes / Coedkernew, St. Mellons.
- **New stations between Cardiff and Bridgend:** St. Fagans, Llanharan, Brackla.
- **New stations on the Swansea District line:** Llandarcy Enterprise Park, Morrision Parkway, Grovesend Parkway.
- **New stations west of Swansea:** Cockett, Loughor, Trostre, St. Clears, Templeton, Fishguard & Goodwick.
- **New freight mini-terminals:** Bridgend, Carmarthen, Fishguard.

**6.3.3.8 Heart of Wales Line**

- **New stations:** Gorseinon, Ammanford Town, Glanamau.
- **New freight mini-terminals:** Llandoverly, Llandrindod.

**6.3.3.9 Aberystwyth & Pwllheli - Shrewsbury**

- **New stations:** Bow Street, Carno.
- **New freight mini-terminals:** Shrewsbury, Newtown, Aberystwyth.

**6.3.3.10 Shrewsbury - Chester**

- **New stations:** Baschurch, Whittington, Weston Rhyn, Cefn, Johnstown, Rossett, Chester Business Park.
- **New freight mini-terminal:** Wrexham.

**6.3.3.11 Holyhead / Caernarfon / Llangefni - Chester**

- **New stations:** Caernarfon, Y Felinheli, Llangefni, Greenfield, Bagillt, Connah's Quay, Queensferry.
- **New freight mini-terminals:** Llandudno Junction, Bangor, Holyhead.

**6.3.3.12 Conwy Valley line**

- **New freight mini-terminal:** Blaenau Ffestiniog.

**6.3.3.13 Wrexham - Bidston / Liverpool**

- **New station:** Woodchurch.

**6.3.3.14 Cardiff Light Rail system**

Four lines are proposed (possible names have been suggested):-

- **Line 1 (The Discovery line)** would run from north east Cardiff, via the University Hospital at Heath via the City Centre and Cardiff Central Station to Cardiff Bay and on to the Sports Village. It would be built in phases, the section from Heath Hospital to Cardiff Bay being built first. There is already a reservation for a future light rail system between Cardiff Central and Cardiff Bay. Most of the rest, at least as far north as Heath Hospital, would probably involve street running.
- **Line 2 (Cardiff City Circle)** would be a circular route, sharing line 1 between Cardiff Central and Heath Hospital. Thereafter, it would continue on street, regaining the Coryton line (which would be converted for Light Rail). Similarly, the existing line between Cardiff Central and Radyr would be converted for dual use of LRT and conventional rail. Modifications to the line through Canton Depot would be needed to increase the speed limit and to double the track through this section. A segregated link between Radyr and Coryton would complete the circle.
- **Line 3 (The Novello line)** would be a substantially east / west line running from St. Mellons to Culverhouse Cross. From St. Mellons, it would run alongside the main line as far as Adamsdown, where it would split. The direct route would run along East Tyndall Street, joining line 2 at Callaghan Square, and continuing to the south of Central Station. The other branch would follow the existing freight line past Atlantic Wharf, before joining the road system to access Cardiff Bay and return to Central Station along the same tracks as line 1. From Central Station, line 2 would be followed as far as Victoria Park, from where line 3 would run on road through Ely to Culverhouse Cross.
- **Line 4 (The Roald Dahl line)** would be a spur from the City Circle from a point between Fairwater and Danescourt that would run mostly on disused railway alignment to Creigiau. In the longer term, this could possibly be extended to Beddau if sufficient demand is identified.

#### 6.3.3.15 Swansea area light rail system

Two lines are proposed, which would share a common section between High Street rail station and County Hall:-

- **Line 1** would run from Morriston Parkway station / DVLA / Morriston Hospital via Landore Park & Ride, High Street rail station, City Centre, Quadrant bus station, County Hall, University, Singleton Hospital and Oystermouth to Mumbles.
- **Line 2** would commence at Gowerton rail station and run via Dunvant, Killay, Sketty, Uplands, High Street rail station, City Centre, Quadrant bus station, County Hall, 'SA1' development, Fabian Way Park & Ride, Jersey Marine, Llandarcy Enterprise Park to Neath rail station.

## 7 Political control / planning / funding of rail services

### 7.1 Problems arising from the rail industry structure

#### 7.1.1 Costs and funding

- .1 We remain unconvinced that passengers' best interests were served by the dismemberment of the former British Rail into numerous companies covering the various facets of running the railway. Thus we have Network Rail owning and operating the infrastructure; Rolling Stock Leasing companies (ROSCOs) owning and leasing trains; Train Operating Companies (TOCs) operating the trains under franchise terms; and a myriad of companies involved in maintenance and renewal. Few would now argue that any benefits which might have resulted from such a complex structure (which currently requires three regulatory agencies) are remotely commensurate with the enormous increase in costs which has accompanied the change. This trend has been exacerbated by adopting a philosophy of 'absolute safety at any cost' for railways, but not for other forms of transport - in itself a potentially self-defeating stance if it results in passengers being priced off the railway onto less safe forms of transport such as cars. Thus:-
  - it now costs up to three times as much to provide comparable train services as was the case under the pre-1993 unified system;
  - maintenance and renewal of the network costs more than three times the European average, and twice the highest figure on mainland Europe;
  - the capital costs of enhancements generally appear to be 30 to 70% higher than comparable work elsewhere in Europe;
  - huge and grossly unrealistic estimates of cost are quoted for network enhancements. An example is the upgrading of the 28 mile Conwy Valley line to render it suitable for freight (slate waste removal), which Network Rail said would cost £280m (sic).
- .2 These factors suggest that, although the government is indeed spending large sums of money on the railways, only about one third of the value which should be expected is actually obtained. This is of major concern to those advocating development of routes and services, as opposed to merely maintaining the status quo.
- .3 It is vital to appreciate that these points do not argue against investing in rail. Instead they show the imperative for costs to be brought under control so that rail development represents good value for money.
- .4 Rail passenger services which do not earn a profit need revenue support, but it should not be assumed that such support will necessarily be significantly greater for the expanded services proposed herein than it is at present. The rationale is that improved service quality (in the broadest sense) will attract more users and hence there will be a revenue gain, by creating a 'virtuous cycle' of improved services leading to higher patronage leading to further improvements. Although some services will always need revenue support, the gap between their costs and attributable revenue will be minimised by such means.

### 7.1.2 Some effects of over-regulation

- .1 SRA policies have had some particularly negative effects, including:-
  - the steady erosion of through trains between west Wales and destinations in England (which is set to become even worse under ATW's current timetable plans);
  - loss of through trains between north Wales and Birmingham;
  - imposition of arbitrary boundaries - and reluctance to sanction through trains working across them - to suit the TOC structure, such as the cessation of through services from west Wales to Portsmouth and London Waterloo.
- .2 An increasingly stringent regime in the name of safety has led to much greater disruption of services than in the past. Frequent total line closures at weekends (and, increasingly, at other times also) are now required for routine maintenance, rather than for upgrading of the infrastructure. In the past, 'single line working' (one track closed for maintenance, while trains operate - possibly at reduced service levels - on the adjacent track) would have applied. The road equivalent of today's rail safety policy would be to totally close a motorway when work is carried out, rather than coning off individual lanes.

## 7.2 The way forward

### 7.2.1 The National Assembly for Wales

- .1 The establishment of the National Assembly for Wales provided an opportunity to take a fresh look at public transport provision, organisation and funding in Wales and the Borders. But hitherto the Assembly's powers over rail have been extremely limited, and this has contributed to its inability to deliver a fully integrated transport system. Consequently we welcome the announcement in the recent government White Paper (July 2004), that rail powers are to be devolved to the Assembly in relation to the Wales and Borders franchise, together with an increase in the Assembly's block grant equivalent to that awarded to the franchisee by the SRA (which is to be abolished).
- .2 The details of these proposals are awaited, but it is anticipated that they will include several of the clauses contained in the Draft Transport (Wales) Bill, including the need to consult the English border counties (Gloucestershire, Herefordshire, Shropshire and Cheshire) on matters relating to rail services which affect them. Representatives from these counties would need to be included in partnership with the Assembly on whatever institution is set up to oversee the franchise, be it a PTE-style body or an equivalent of the present-day Welsh local authority consortia. They could participate at county level, or through the appropriate (currently non-elected) English regional assemblies.
- .3 It is essential that the additional block grant is 'ring-fenced'. This would not prevent the Assembly from supplementing that expenditure from its own budget where circumstances demand (as already happens now).
- .4 The Assembly's relationship with Network Rail under these proposals, and the extent to which it is able to influence and control the latter's investment programme, is not yet clear and will be of significant importance for future development.

### 7.2.2 A Passenger Transport Authority for Wales

- .1 Reference has been made in the introduction to the arguments in favour of a PTA for Wales. In particular, in England and Scotland, PTAs have been able to achieve far more integration between different modes of public transport than currently exists in Wales.
- .2 Therefore, we believe that a PTA responsible to the Assembly would be the most sensible way forward for public transport in Wales. The way in which such a body would be organised is a matter for debate: perhaps it should have sub-divisions to match the geography of the country.
- .3 Consortia of local authorities have been set up in Wales, recognising that the unitary authorities individually are far too small to be able to handle transport matters on their own. The South East Wales Transport Alliance (SEWTA) - an amalgamation of the former SWIFT and TIGER consortia - covers an area containing half the population of Wales, and in many ways operates as a PTA would do, but without all the powers which the latter would have. Other consortia known as SWWITCH, TAITH and the mid Wales Partnership (TraCC) fulfil similar roles in south west, north and mid Wales respectively. We feel that an overall PTA-type structure would ensure that fairness, integration and good practice apply in all areas, with no one area favoured at the expense of others. The establishment of the consortia can therefore be seen as a step towards a PTA, and the sub-divisions of the latter - alluded to above - could comprise the existing consortia.

### 7.2.3 The community railway concept

- .1 Lines in rural areas of north and mid Wales need greater management attention in order to fulfil their potential. Understandably, managers' time is focused on the busier inter-urban routes where the most traffic and often the greatest problems are concentrated.
- .2 There is a great deal of support for the rural lines in the communities which they serve - they are seen as lifelines which reduce isolation and as a way of attracting economic growth, especially through tourism. For some of these lines, Community Rail Partnerships (CRPs) have already been established - an example being the Heart of Wales line Forum. These bring together the TOC, Network Rail, local authorities, tourism and economic development agencies and local rail user groups. They do good work in finding ways to develop the lines concerned, but suffer not only from insufficient attention from rail management but also from 'short-termism', in that CRP budgets are often set only for a year at a time - where, typically, a line development officer is employed by the CRP, that person has to spend a disproportionate amount of his / her time trying to secure the future of the post itself rather than concentrating on looking for new business.
- .3 Therefore we welcome the SRA's recent consultation paper on the community railways concept. At least there is now a realisation at the highest level within the industry that local routes need special, positive attention if they are to prosper.
- .4 A "community railway" is defined by the SRA as having a service of less than hourly frequency, not linked directly to London and with a line speed of less than 75 mph. The London link aspect of this may read oddly in the Welsh context, but we agree with the SRA's view that no single template for the future of such lines

will fit every case - there are, for example, different models of local management, depending on the degree of independence from the TOC. Whichever is chosen, the result in our view must be that proper attention is given to providing trains at times when people actually want to use them - too often at present these services are "resource led" and local markets are served only by chance, if at all. Each line needs a manager based somewhere near its mid point who has close links with the local community and is tasked with seeking out and developing new sources of traffic. This manager must have sufficient authority, for example, to provide additional trains to service 'one-off' events when necessary. The manager would report to the CRP, which would agree a business plan for the route. Funding for the service and for the CRP and its employees must be for the same term as the franchise as a whole.

- .5 There has been considerable discussion of the potential for reducing costs on lines which are designated as community railways. It is suggested in the SRA's consultation paper that on such lines there could be some relaxation of network standards so that infrastructure is not over-specified but is appropriate for the levels of traffic involved. We support such moves, provided they do not - for example - reduce the flexibility of a route to take locomotive-hauled trains where these are needed (such as for tourists) and above all so long as safety is not compromised in any way.

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- .19 "The Future of Rail" Government White Paper (July 2004)

*For further information about Railfuture / RDS Wales, please apply to Railfuture Wales, 84 North Street, Abergavenny NP7 7ED. Any comments or queries arising from this Development Plan are welcomed and should be sent to the same address.*

## Minimum service frequencies - south Wales

The following section summarises what we believe to be the minimum service frequencies needed on the stretches of lines quoted, in order for the aims of this Plan to be realised. The frequencies shown do not necessarily apply to all stations.

<b>Shrewsbury - Craven Arms</b>	5 per 2 hours
<b>Craven Arms - Newport</b>	2 per hour
<b>Chepstow - Severn Tunnel Junction</b>	2 per hour
<b>Severn Tunnel Junction - Newport</b>	At least 6 per hour
<b>Ebbw Vale - Aberbeeg</b>	1 per hour
<b>Abertillery - Aberbeeg</b>	1 per hour
<b>Aberbeeg - Newport</b>	2 per hour
<b>Newport - Cardiff</b>	At least 9 per hour
<b>Cardiff - Caerphilly</b>	6 per hour
<b>Caerphilly - Ystrad Mynach</b>	4 per hour
<b>Ystrad Mynach - Treharris</b>	1 per hour
<b>Ystrad Mynach - Bargoed</b>	3 per hour
<b>Bargoed - Rhymney</b>	2 per hour
<b>Cardiff - Pontypridd</b>	8 per hour
<b>Pontypridd - Treherbert</b>	2 per hour
<b>Pontypridd - Merthyr</b>	2 per hour
<b>Pontypridd - Aberdare</b>	2 per hour
<b>Aberdare - Hirwaun</b>	1 per hour
<b>Cardiff - Cardiff Bay</b>	At least 2 per hour (pending LRT)
<b>Cardiff light rail</b>	At least 6 per hour
<b>Cardiff - Penarth</b>	4 per hour
<b>Cardiff - Barry</b>	4 per hour
<b>Barry - Barry Island</b>	2 per hour
<b>Barry - Bridgend</b>	2 per hour
<b>Cardiff - Swansea / Morriston</b>	5 per hour
<b>Bridgend - Maesteg</b>	2 per hour
<b>Port Talbot - Llanelli via District line</b>	1 per hour
<b>Swansea - Llanelli</b>	2 per hour
<b>Swansea light rail</b>	At least 6 per hour
<b>Swansea - Pantyffynnon</b>	1 per hour
<b>Pantyffynnon - Amman Valley</b>	1 per 2 hours
<b>Pantyffynnon - Craven Arms</b>	1 per 2 hours
<b>Llanelli - Whitland</b>	2 per hour
<b>Whitland - Tenby</b>	1 per hour
<b>Tenby - Pembroke Dock</b>	1 per 2 hours
<b>Whitland - Milford Haven</b>	1 per hour
<b>Clarbeston Road - Fishguard</b>	4 per day



## Minimum service frequencies - mid and north Wales

The following section summarises what we believe to be the minimum service frequencies needed on the stretches of lines quoted, in order for the aims of this Plan to be realised. The frequencies shown do not necessarily apply to all stations.

<b>Aberystwyth - Shrewsbury</b>	1 per hour
<b>Pwllheli - Machynlleth</b>	1 per 2 hours
<b>Shrewsbury - Ruabon</b>	2 per hour
<b>Llangollen - Ruabon</b>	1 per hour
<b>Ruabon - Chester</b>	3 per hour
<b>Wrexham - Bidston / Liverpool</b>	2 per hour
<b>Crewe - Chester</b>	2 per hour
<b>Chester - Rhyl</b>	4 per hour
<b>Rhyl - Llandudno Junction</b>	3 per hour
<b>Llandudno Junction - Llandudno</b>	At least 3 per hour
<b>Llandudno - Betws y Coed</b>	1 per hour tourist season, otherwise 1 per 2 hours
<b>Betws y Coed - Blaenau Ffestiniog</b>	1 per 2 hours
<b>Llandudno Junction - Bangor</b>	2 per hour
<b>Bangor - Llanfair PG.</b>	2 per hour
<b>Llanfair PG. - Holyhead</b>	1 per hour (augmented to suit ferry times)
<b>Llanfair PG. - Llangefni</b>	1 per hour
<b>Bangor - Caernarfon</b>	1 per hour