



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru  
Welsh Assembly Government

## **National Transport Plan**

### **Consultation Questions**

The following questions are provided to help structure responses to the consultation on the National Transport Plan.

The closing date for consultation responses is **Monday 12th October 2009**.

Responses to the consultation document can be submitted in writing or electronically via email. Please forward electronic responses to [nationaltransportplan@wales.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:nationaltransportplan@wales.gsi.gov.uk)

Written responses should be addressed to:

**National Transport Plan consultation**

Transport Policy and Legislation Unit

Transport & Strategic Regeneration

Department for the Economy and Transport

Cathays Park

Cardiff

CF10 3NQ

Please note, the Welsh Assembly Government intends to publish a summary of the responses to this consultation document. Normally, the name and address (or part of the address) of its author are published along with the response, as this gives credibility to the consultation exercise. If you do not wish to be identified as the author of your response, please state this expressly in writing to us.

## Your details

If you are responding on behalf of an organisation or group please give the name of the organisation here and your contact details below.

Name of organisation or group Better Trains for Chepstow Group

## Contact details

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## Questions

1. Do you think the proposals for integrating transport at the all-Wales level are the right ones to deliver the vision for transport?

Yes  No

### Comments

The Wales Spatial Plan outlined the aim for a suitable high capacity public transport service linking Chepstow, a key settlement in the Capital Region. The decision not to proceed with the M4 relief road adds urgency to improving train services from the Chepstow line and Severn Tunnel Junction into Newport and Cardiff.

It is disappointing that the plan contains no proposals for upgrading the frequency of train services to Chepstow, Caldicot or the Gloucester line to hourly and half hourly or making better use of the under utilised railway resources. The existing infrastructure has the capacity to carry more trains and passengers.

If SE Wales is to be integrated at the all Wales level then its train services need to be operated at the same frequency as those that operate to the North and the timetables need to be structured to facilitate passenger connections.

We support the concept for Park and Ride and suggest that the developments already underway at Severn Tunnel Junction should be extended and better road access and enlarged parking provided. This would alleviate some traffic congestion on the M4 into Newport and Cardiff

We suggest that Chepstow should be considered a candidate for the Sustainable town.

2. Do you think the proposals for integrating transport on the north/south corridor are the right ones to deliver the vision for transport?

Yes  No

### Comments

The franchise contract awarded to FGW in December 2006 cut services calling at Severn Tunnel Junction and consequently reduced the number of trains serving Newport and Cardiff from SE Monmouthshire. If the improvements in the north/south corridor are to be enjoyed by those living in SE Monmouthshire then FGW should be asked to restore these services.

Restoring the lost services would not cost anything and would not require any extra trains.

3. Do you think the proposals for integrating transport on the east/west corridor in south Wales are the right ones to deliver the vision for transport?

Yes  No

**Comments**

It is not clear whether this corridor extends along the line to Chepstow and Gloucester but we would draw attention to the importance of this route as an alternative to the Severn Tunnel which is regularly closed for maintenance. The strategic importance of this alternative route to London via Swindon will become increasingly important as services through the tunnel become more frequent. When the tunnel is electrified closures can be expected to be more prolonged through attending to the high voltage electrical equipment in the notoriously wet tunnel.

The retention of Bishton Flyover between Newport and Severn Tunnel Junction will prevent this vital four track section of railway into Wales being used to its full capacity and curtail improvements in line speeds along this 10 mile section.

We find it surprising that this relic of the 1960's was not removed and the line speeds increased as part of the Newport Area resignalling scheme. Resignalling schemes are rare events, usually only undertaken at 40 year intervals. The scheme involves substantial track alterations at Severn Tunnel Junction that could have provided an excellent opportunity to remove the redundant structure and realign the tracks. Straightening the tracks would not only allow speeds to be increased but would greatly simplify train operation removing the need for services to cross paths and allowing trains to run in parallel instead of in sequence.

To contrast the effect of retaining Bishton Flyover against removing it I have attached a sketch which I hope illustrates the differences. For clarity I have omitted sidings and lesser lines and the diagrammatic sketch is shows main passenger flows only.

(see attached sketch)

4. Do you think the proposals for integrating transport on the east/west corridor in north Wales are the right ones to deliver the vision for transport?

Yes  No

No Comment

5. Do you think the proposals for integrating transport on for the east/west corridor in mid-Wales are the right ones to deliver the vision for transport?

Yes     No

No Comment

6. Do you think the National Transport Plan sets out the right balance between economic, environmental and social factors to enable transport to contribute to the Welsh Assembly Government's CO2 equivalent emissions reductions target of 3 per cent?

Yes     No

No Comment

7. Achieving CO2 equivalent emissions reductions from transport will involve sustained behavioural change by everyone. Do you think the National Transport Plan can do anything else to encourage people to choose the healthy and more sustainable modes of transport?

Yes  No

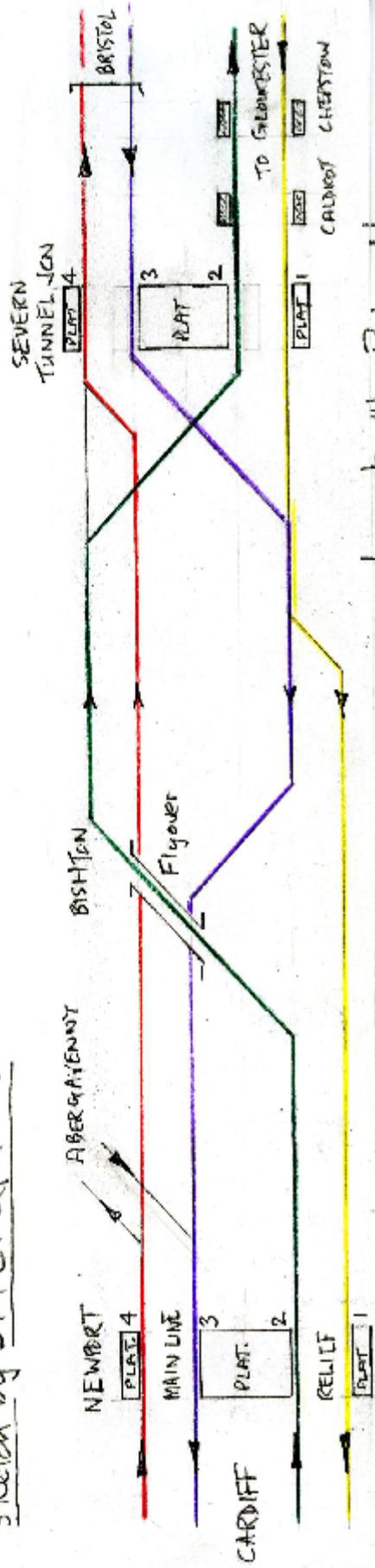
Comments
<p>At Chepstow Arriva CrossCountry trains pass through without stopping and there is sufficient spare time in their schedules to enable them to stop and serve the town at no extra cost and without altering the timetable anywhere else. The Transport Minister agrees that there is time but is unwilling, in the short term, to alter the mandate.</p> <p>Franchise contracts run for up to 16 years and there needs to be a much more flexible approach towards making alterations especially where the contract service levels are not meeting the needs of communities. Unless urgent action is taken to renegotiate these contracts there can be little prospect of making services attractive enough to persuade that train travel is a practical alternative to the car even for journeys to Cardiff.</p>

8. Do you have any further comments to make on the National Transport Plan?

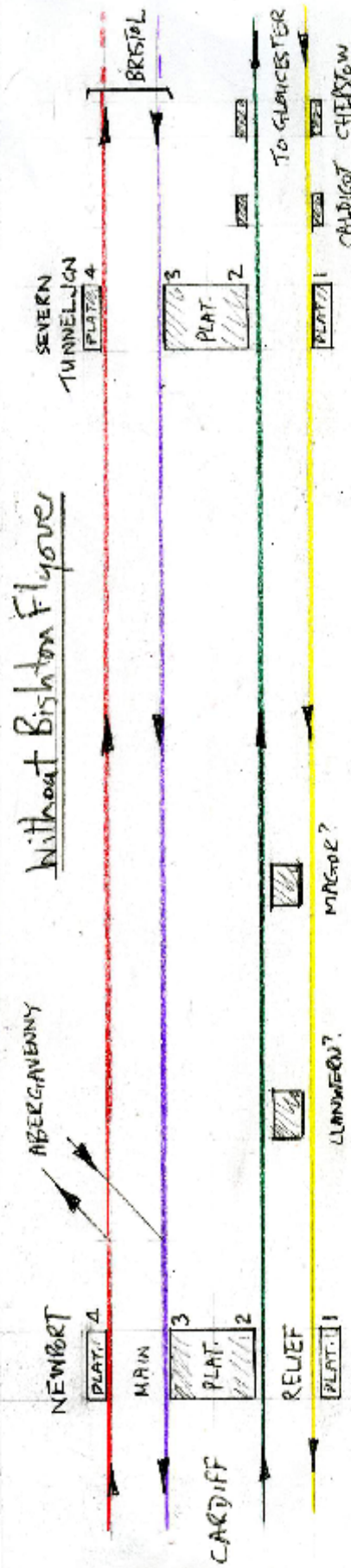
Yes  No

No Comments
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Sketch by BT4C. Sept 2009.



Layout after Resignalling



Sketch to Illustrate Improvement in Passenger Traffic Flow if Flyover Removed.