

Rail Infrastructure and Improved Passenger Service Committee

Date: 15 February 2006
Time: 9.00 to 12.30
Venue: National Assembly for Wales, Cardiff Bay
Title: Arriva Trains Wales



PAPER BY ARRIVA TRAINS WALES

**TO THE RAIL INFRASTRUCTURE
AND IMPROVED PASSENGER SERVICES
COMMITTEE**

15 February 2006

INTRODUCTION

Arriva Trains Wales (ATW) has been asked to report to the Rail Infrastructure and Improved Passenger Services Committee on the 15th February. The Committee has specifically asked for ATW's views on proposals to improve services, within the constraints of the Franchise Agreement and what additional improvements ATW would like to make, if there were no constraints.

Part One of this report covers the first of these questions and Part Two the second, with an accompanying Appendix One.

PART ONE – SERVICE PROVISION PROVIDED FOR IN THE FRANCHISE AGREEMENT

BACKGROUND

The Franchise Agreement is the contract by which the Strategic Rail Authority (SRA) let the Wales & Borders Franchise to Arriva Trains Limited, commencing in December 2003, for a period of 15 years. The functions of the SRA have since passed to the Department for Transport (DfT). We understand that these functions will be transferred to the Welsh Assembly Government from April this year.

The Franchise Agreement specifies the level and quality of services that the Franchisee (Arriva Trains) and Operator (ATW) must deliver and for which a contracted subsidy level is paid by the SRA.

Any services which are not specified in the Franchise Agreement would thus, from the Operator's point of view, need to be commercially viable or be supported by additional subsidies, before they could be considered for operation. It is the nature of the market and rail cost structure of the area served by ATW that few, if any, services can operate without some level of support.

The Franchise Agreement includes specified train services supported by the franchise payments, additional Rail Passenger Partnership schemes, such as Vale of Glamorgan, with associated additional funding and provision for Options and Aspirations.

Within its bid, Arriva provided a number of priced Options requested by the SRA and also offered some of its own exclusive additional priced Options, including the Standard Pattern Timetable, together with un-priced longer term aspirations. Some of the Options offered by Arriva were contractualised in the Franchise Agreement, enabling the SRA to exercise them if it required.

Of these contractualised Options, the Ebbw Vale Option and the Standard Pattern Timetable Option have been exercised and the Valley Lines Crowding Relief and Subsidy Reduction Options have not.

PROGRESS WITH OPTIONS

Ebbw Vale

ATW is engaged in the development of this project and looks forward to the opening of services to passengers during 2007.

Standard Pattern Timetable

The Standard Pattern Timetable was planned by Arriva and offered in its bid to provide a higher level of service at broadly the same level of subsidy as required to operate the base timetable specified in the franchise process. It was constrained to the same fleet size as the base bid and to not require any infrastructure enhancements, on the grounds of both cost and ease of implementation.

This Option was exercised in September 2004 and came into operation on December 11th 2005. This implementation date was chosen in bidding to allow an extensive consultation process with both stakeholders and the general public. Our process of consultation has been widely regarded as industry best practice and we are proud of the inclusive iterative approach we used to arrive at the timetable now in operation.

The implementation of the SPT in December 2005 was successful, although the full benefits were partly obscured for the first few weeks by significant infrastructure issues, including Cardiff West track remodelling and the severing of a major communications link to both our and Network Rail's joint control offices.

However, the SPT has already achieved a step change in our Public Performance Measures (PPM) one of the key measures within the Franchise Agreement. We have recorded a PPM figure of 87.4% for the period from 8 January 2006 – 4 February, 2006 our highest ever, against 83.3% the same period in 2005 and continuing performance benefits are expected.

Within unchanged funding in the Franchise Agreement, we are delivering with the SPT:-

- Over 150 new services a day across the network, 950 per week.
- A 28% increase in Sunday services.
- An improved hourly Carmarthen-Cardiff-Manchester service, coordinated with FGW, to provide two fast trains per hour between Swansea and Cardiff.
- A new two hourly direct service from Holyhead to Cardiff.
- A complete revision of Cardiff Valleys local services providing regular interval services on all lines, at least half-hourly where infrastructure permits and every fifteen minutes on the core sections.
- We have created over 100 new jobs to help deliver the enhance service
- Introduced more comfortable trains on the main North – South / West Wales routes.

Peak capacity

The SRA chose not to implement the Valley Lines Crowding Relief Option and has indicated that RPP schemes, including those providing additional capacity on Valley Lines, will not be funded after their initial three-year periods. This, together with the continuing growth in patronage on Cardiff local services, represents a major difficulty for us and our passengers.

We therefore welcome the funding of additional rolling stock provided by the Welsh Assembly Government, which plays a vital role in allowing us to supplement capacity at peak times, particularly an issue with services in the Valleys network.

FUTURE SERVICE DEVELOPMENT

The SPT is new and we believe should be allowed to properly 'bed in' and be reviewed prior to undertaking additional services. However, it was designed to allow certain service improvements to be added easily when infrastructure improvements and/or funding permit, without the requirement for major change.

We will review the results of the SPT and continue to work with stakeholders on opportunities to optimise it within existing support or to enhance the SPT if further support becomes available.

Examples of progress in this area would be the work we are currently undertaking with TAITH, the North Wales Local Authority Consortia and (CASPAR) the Crewe to Shrewsbury Passenger Association.

STATIONS

Franchise agreements are not restricted to train services, but may also include plans for improvements at leased stations. The SRA did not choose any of Arriva's options for station improvements, but did include in the agreement a contractual commitment to make improvements at five station car parks.

However we have built on this commitment and have recently agreed with both the DfT and Welsh Assembly Government that we will make improvements at 18 car parks across our network with the aim of securing the new Park Mark award at all, which will enhance customer environment and security at these locations at a funding level above our Franchise commitment

FUTURE PLANS

Outside of the Franchise Agreement, Arriva Trains Wales is investing significant capital, sometimes in partnership with third parties, particularly the Welsh Assembly Government. Partnership projects include:

- Provision of CCTV on all our units, funded by WAG.
- In conjunction with WAG and the British Transport Police (BTP) – 21 Police Community Support Officers to supplement the work of the BTP.
- In conjunction with WAG over £1m on improving CCTV and Customer Information Systems (C.I.S) at stations in the North.
- The Chester Gateway project to enhance Chester Station, including £1.25m from Arriva.

Examples of our own investment include:-

- Expanded maintenance depot at Machynlleth.
- The purchase of a wheel lathe for Canton depot.
- Ticket Gating at 12 stations

- Automatic Ticket Vending Machines at 14 locations.
- The provision of security staff on particular problem routes and at some key stations
- A dedicated security officer.

TRAIN FLEET

The Franchise Agreement was based on continuing to use the inherited train fleet, with the exceptions that loco-hauled trains on Valleys services were to be replaced by second-hand class 150 units from Scotland (now done) and some class 158 units would be replaced by class 175 units from December 2006, when the SRA's required sub-lease to Trans-Pennine Express ends. The SRA did not adopt Arriva's proposals for other new trains.

Although there are no requirements for refurbishment, we recognise it is a key customer aspiration and we are working with the leasing companies to find commercially acceptable ways of achieving this. We are currently in the process of refurbishing the majority of our class 150 units, along with modifications to enhance their performance, and are developing proposals for class 158 units.

We have recently completed a series of door modifications to the class 14x (Pacer) fleet which has seen a drop of reported door failures (a reason why a train has to be taken out of service) from anywhere between 10 – 16 faults a week to 3 or less.

ATW will continue to build upon the work completed, both within the constraints of the Franchise Agreement and outside it where a sound business case exists, to enhance and develop the services in our network.

PART TWO – ADDITIONAL IMPROVEMENTS YOU WOULD LIKE TO MAKE IF THERE WERE NO CONSTRAINTS

BACKGROUND AND PRIORITIES

The Franchise Agreement, as stated earlier, set the contractual level of service delivery for the duration of the Franchise in accordance with the wishes and funding ability at the time of then client body. Just as we proposed a number of options for additional services and investment in our bid, we remain committed throughout the life of the franchise to explore development options with the current client body.

We recognise that most ideas likely to be generated would require additional public support and that there is both competition for and an opportunity cost to such public spending. We see our role as to identify cost-effective development proposals aimed at meeting the transport and other policy objectives, such as social inclusion, economic development and the environment, of the client body and other stakeholders. It must fall to the client body, shortly to be the Welsh Assembly Government, to decide which if any of these proposals should be implemented.

Subject to that, we are pleased to indicate where we consider opportunities exist to develop our services.

NEW TRAINS

We remain of the view that the trains used on Cardiff valley services, in particular the Pacer units, do not provide the capacity, reliability or image required to provide expanding services to the capital city. The lack of suitable urban diesel units has also led us to sub-optimal use of other available train types.

We believe that the provision of new rolling stock primarily for Cardiff local services would substantially improve the service that ATW can offer, with benefits of redeployment of other units elsewhere in Wales and the border counties. New rolling stock would thus be our joint first priority when considering the development of services in Wales.

We are currently undertaking detailed work on a rolling stock strategy at the request of the Welsh Assembly Government.

SERVICES

Within the SPT as just implemented, we were unable to provide the full pattern of services we would have wished because infrastructure was not available and/or funding would not permit. Our suggested enhancements to address inconsistencies in service levels and imbalances of supply and demand on existing urban and interurban services are as follows.

- Aberystwyth-Birmingham hourly
- Merthyr, Rhymney, Maesteg and Vale of Glamorgan services half-hourly
- Cardiff-Swansea and Cardiff-Gloucester stopping services hourly
- Additional North Wales services from Crewe.

We would also be pleased to re-quote some of our earlier options for rural service development or, with stakeholders, bring forward new proposals for existing or reopened lines.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Most of the above service enhancements require infrastructure works. In addition, some of our services are not as reliable as we would wish because there is only just sufficient capacity or facilities to enable them to work if there is no disruption to our own or other operators' services, often as a result of past rationalisation or minimal provision. We would favour improving infrastructure to achieve greater capacity and robustness, particularly to address the capacity constraints of the Cardiff local network.

A series of enhancement projects are required around this network to achieve the service levels described above. Furthermore the track, signalling and stations (Cardiff Central and Queen Street) have to be remodelled, expanded and upgraded if we and other operators are to deliver robust timetable performance and if increased service frequencies above the SPT are required.

An opportunity to address these issues comes very soon with the Network Rail Cardiff Resignalling Project – 2008 and must not be lost.

Our joint first priority for enhancement along with new trains is a programme of platform extensions on the Valleys network to allow longer train formations to operate on peak services.

GENERIC ASPIRATIONS

Beyond the immediate priorities outlined above we have detailed below our generic aspirations within a no constraints context below which are in no particular priority order:-

- Double track where we currently operate intensive services over single lines. Single lines are both a restraint on the development of railways in Wales and a significant performance problem as delays are transmitted from one train to many others. The best value solution in some cases will be double track and in others more or longer passing loops.
- New train-based GPS system which would enable us to deliver real-time information to all our customer information systems We would seek then to extend where appropriate the CIS to car parks and to town centres to improve the trail to the train.
- Stations across our network fully accessible to persons with a wide range of disabilities.
- Platform rebuilt where these are currently out of current standards (usually too low). This will provide easier and improved access to trains

- New shelters, seating and lighting to enhance both convenience and security.
- We would look to introduce a minimum standard specification for all our stations which could include heated waiting rooms/ shelter, C.I.S and CCTV.
- Expand staffed stations hours or provide staffing for perhaps the top 100 stations to staffing between first and last train.
- Expand ticket barrier and ticket vending machine installation to top 30 stations to improve revenue capture and reduce anti-social behaviour.
- Extend Police Community Support Officers and security guards for perhaps the top 30 stations and to cover all late night services.
- Increase platform staff to provide customer assistance and the provision of information during disruption along with improving accessibility to impaired people.
- GPRS for train monitoring across the network failing this an increase in the level of automatic train reporting points.
- Improve the infrastructure which could lead to enhanced usage of the railway. For example line speed improvements.
- Consider a list of stations for total rebuild with a blank sheet of paper approach. We would use a range of examples from across the totality of the network which we serve.

Further to this list we have attached as Appendix One to this report a table of specific possible enhancements.

Although we have included some schemes in which we are already involved, we have also included others on which no work has been done to date. We do not have business cases at present to support the items, nor is there any implication that a positive case can be made.

Each project would require investigation of its practicality, cost and benefits, taking account of train service issues of use and performance together with wider issues of environmental benefits, social inclusion, economic development, tourism and employment gains.

CONCLUSION

We look forward to meeting the Committee on February 15th and presenting this report and we hope that the Committee will recognise the work undertaken to date within the context of the Franchise Agreement and that any recommendations it makes reflect our stated priorities contained in Part Two of this report.

Arriva Trains Wales Aspirations February 2006

North Wales – Improvements

Doubling Of Track from Chester to Wrexham

The track is from Wrexham to Saltney Junction this would enable additional trains on the line and no restrictions waiting for freight and passenger services. At the moment this is approximately a 15 minute single line so any train not in its path would wait 15 minutes for a train to arrive from the opposite direction.

Signalling at Rhyl

Remove the distant signal from Rhyl by putting in an outer distant. This would enable at least 2 minutes to be taken off a journey time on the North Wales Coast between Prestatyn and Abergele on the down.

Holyhead to Chester

Re signalling Anglesey and parts of the North Wales Coast.

This would enable a more frequent service. At the moment some block times are about 15 to 18 minutes. There is a signal box at Valley and the next is Gaerwen. Nothing can move until a train clears the track so the best that will be is an 18 minute service. Similarly between Rhyl and Chester, the blocks in the evening when signal boxes close could be Holywell to Prestatyn.

Fares

Review of Concessionary Fares on trains.

Platforms

- **Shrewsbury** - Remodel Platform 3 to bring into full passenger use. This would bring increased flexibility.
- **Wrexham** - Renew Bay platforms.

Additional service to Crewe

Review of North Wales timetable. This would be completed in conjunction with TAITH.

Wrexham to Bidston

Increase frequency of timetable for customer benefits and performance robustness.

Ffestiniog

Increase frequency of timetable for customer benefits and performance robustness.

Nantwich Station

Develop as staffed station with parking to cater for housing development and

demand for services to Manchester.

Mid Wales – Improvements

Cambrian Line Frequency

Infrastructure (additional and extended loops, signaling and line speed improvements) required for an hourly service on Cambrian Line. Awaiting Network Rail feasibility study. This will give an hourly service between Aberystwyth and Shrewsbury. ERTMS will assist in this project by taking away the signalling restraints.

Signalling / line speed enhancements

Increase line speed to 90mph between Shrewsbury and Wolverhampton North with increased capacity. Signalling enhancements would complement the increase in line speeds which would assist with timetable opportunities.

Cambrian

Review timetable to enhance customer and performance opportunities.

Assets

Axle counters and motorised points - Enhance to provide improved reliability.

TSRs/PSRs

Remove Aberdovey speed restriction.

Cambrian Linespeeds

- Shrewsbury – Machynlleth increase to 90mph where possible and on to Pwllheli / Aberystwyth increase as feasible

South West Wales – Improvements

Double track

- Double-track the section through Gowerton (Cockett to Duffryn) allowing the Cardiff – Swansea stopping (Swanline) service to run hourly and be extended to Pembroke Dock.

Track upgrades

- Swansea district to allow direct services from W Wales to Cardiff.
- Extend the Aberdare branch to Hirwaun which is currently a freight line only. Allows for the opportunity for the extension of services.
- Double track Bridgend to Maesteg or upgrade Tondu crossing loop. Timetable opportunities would be made available as a result.
- Convert from single to double the lead junction access from the west.

Stations

- **Carmarthen Station** - Reinstate the bay platform. This would allow for cross platforming in line with hub station status and reduce / eliminate the need for the barrow crossing.
- **Swansea Station** - Relocate platform repeater signals and double track on

approach from Carmarthen

South East Wales – Improvements

ATW support the SEWTA programme phase 2006-2007 and 2007-2008 as outlined in the Future Rail projects for Wales, subject to the requisite funding allowing for traincrew and rolling stock to be provided for. We also believe that in terms of platform lengthening Treherbert should take priority in advance of Maesteg.

In relation to the SEWTA further improvements, as also listed in the above named document, we believe that the remodelling of Queen Street station (capacity) should be given the greatest priority within the list. In a no constraints world the reliability and capacity measures included within the medium term rail strategy should be brought forward as they would have an immediate effect on performance. These include the turn back facility at Barry to enable trains to start back from down the platform in the event of service disruption, greater capacity at Cogan junction and an intermediate signal section at Llandaff northbound to reduce the length of sections towards Radyr.

Cardiff area re-signalling

- Re-double the following; Porth to Treherbert, Abercynon to Aberdare and Merthyr, half hourly services on all routes – six car platform lengths.
- 'Four track railway' to be provided Queen St North to Cogan Junction. All lines reversible.
- Re-double Penarth branch but make both lines from Cogan Junction reversible.
- Re-double Coryton branch (possible re-opening of extension to Taffs Well)
- Double track Bargoed to Rhymney section for half-hourly service.
- Pontypridd station to be re-modelled and re-signalled with at least 3 through platform faces of which 2 must be reversible.

The Cardiff area re-signalling scheme is an opportunity which in our view should not be lost. Infrastructure capacity is a major constraint to rail development and of particular concern is the South Wales area west of Cardiff and the route section from Cogan Junction to Queen Street North Junction including the significant limitations at both Cardiff Central and Queen Street Stations.

Platform Extensions

Rhymney, Treherbert and then Maesteg.

Abercynon

Part of the Cardiff to Merthyr frequency enhancement scheme to include a strategic park and ride facility.

Barry

Turn back facility to enable trains to start back from the Down platform in the event of service disruption.

Stations

Cardiff Queen Street and Central - remodelling

Cardiff Central and Newport - Insert Off Indicators to assist with train dispatch.

Platforms

- **Cardiff Central** - Create both east and west facing bay platforms (eg reinstatement of Platform 5) which would provide increased options for terminating services e.g VoG, Maesteg, West Wales.
- **Cardiff Central** - Create platforms 8&9 to provide greater operational flexibility
- **Cardiff Central** - Platform 0 – alter to allow passenger train arrivals from West.
- **Caerphilly** - Create Up bay platform to enable services from Cardiff to turn back without blocking through services.

Canton Depot

Upgrade the access and egress to the depot.

Loops

- **Ystrad Rhondda** - Extend south to Llwynpia. Not required if the single line track is doubled throughout as per our generic requests.
- **Mountain Ash** - Extend south to Penrhiwceiber. Not required if the single line track is doubled throughout as per our generic requests.
- **Stormstown** – Upgrade. Not required if the single line track is doubled throughout as per our generic requests.
- **Heath Low Level** – double junction and create loop under bridge to enable an up Coryton train to clear the up Rhymney line while awaiting passage of down Coryton train. Alternative to re-doubling branch.

Linespeeds

We would recommend a complete review of all linespeeds in the Valleys network.

Turnback facilities

Cadoxton

Service

Additional two-hourly Cardiff to Abergavenny overlaid on current SPT to give all day half-hourly service between Cardiff and Abergavenny.

Abergavenny

Reinstate the bay platform to enable service improvements.