



north wales economic ambition board

bwrdd uchelgais economaidd gogledd cymru

Arweinydd Cyngor Sir Conwy / Leader Conwy County Council
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Mr. Chris Dellard
Engineering & Access Planning Manager
Arriva Trains Wales Ltd.
St. Mary's House
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Cardiff CF10 5BJ

Dyddiad/Date: December 2nd 2015
Rhif union/Direct dial:
Ebost/Email:

Dear Mr. Dellard,

Re: Response to the 73rd Supplemental Agreement Consultation by the North Wales Economic Ambition Board

The North Wales Economic Ambition Board 'The Board' work closely with the Welsh Government, and is a body representing the 6 North Wales Local Authorities, together with Chairs of the 3 North Wales Enterprise Zones, representatives from the Mersey Dee Alliance, the academic sector and the business community. The purpose of the Board is the development of the North Wales economy and improved connectivity is central to achieving this.

These are the Board's comments relating the 73rd Supplemental Agreement:

- 1) The Board strongly support the application by ATW to extend a number of North Wales services beyond Manchester Piccadilly to Manchester International Airport ('The airport'). It should be noted that the connectivity to the airport is a long held aspiration not only of the Wales & Borders franchise agreement but also by the Board and it's antecedents. It's disappointing that this aspiration has been frustrated for various reasons on previous occasions.
- 2) The first ground that Network Rail object on for extension of services is Performance. If Network Rail have not previously offered any performance analysis to support this objection it lacks transparency in order to make a fair and balanced decision or rebut the assertion. Furthermore, Network Rail state *inter alia* '.....believe that performance between these locations is particularly sensitive and any extension of ATW services would likely affect services in the area, and likely further afield'. The key words are 'believe' and 'likely', imply less than certainty and Network Rail have not offered any quantification of the risk to service performance. As it stands the Board maintains that this is insufficient to justify Performance as a valid objection.
- 3) The second ground of objection is Reputation. It's a presumption by LNW route to contend that if ATW were granted access to the airport those services would have to be withdrawn at some point in the future. Any



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decision on future access should follow due process at the appropriate time with all parties able to make full and fair representation. As ATW state: *'rail travellers in the wider Manchester will experience many changes over the next few years'*. That makes the objection on Reputation to the extension of ATW services to the airport selective and without justification.

- 4) The Llandudno - Manchester service is very important and should be integral to the planning of the Northern hub. If LNW route suggest that ATW services to the airport might have to be withdrawn, when the Northern hub becomes operational the inference by extension (and corroborated by the Network Rail 2043 ITSS) is that North Wales services may be transferred to Manchester Victoria. In that eventuality journey times to the airport would take even longer, which would not encourage modal shift from road to rail. Services from Manchester Victoria could only go directly to the airport on completion of the Ordsall Curve. It's a far more preferable solution to establish North Wales services to the airport via Manchester Piccadilly and these are maintained post Manchester hub.
- 5) If there is spare capacity for additional services available now it makes good sense to realise the user and operational benefits as soon as is practically possible. Reserving capacity for another operator at some point in the future would mean that all the economic benefits and operational efficiency are lost in the interim. That is a sub optimal use of resources.
- 6) While the Board recognise that there are operational constraints around Manchester Piccadilly and there is an excess of demand over supply of available paths into the airport station we believe that it's wrong for Network Rail to completely deny a major airport catchment area rail access.
- 7) When considering rail service access from North Wales to the airport the Board ask that the wider economic and transport scenario is taken into account:
 - The population of North Wales is 688,000 with the majority concentrated around the coastal strip close to the railway. Cheshire West and Chester has a population of 330,00 which taken together with North Wales adds up to a potential market of around 1mn. This is a big untapped market opportunity for rail that could alleviate congestion on the M56 and parts of the A55.
 - The airport's draft Sustainable Development Plan Economy and Surface Access 2015 plans to cater for an increase in passenger throughput from 22 million passengers per annum to 45 million passenger per annum by 2030. According to the airport 4% of passengers originate from Wales so applying that to the passenger throughput growth will mean an increase in journeys to the airport from 880,000 to 1.8mn per annum over the next 15 years. Without rail access that will place a further burden on an already congested Motorway and close to capacity.
 - The following statement is an excerpt from the Chancellor of the Exchequer's *'Fixing the Foundations presentation July 2015: 'Airports provide critical international connectivity. Aviation contributes £18 billion per year to the UK economy and supports 220,000 jobs. The connections created by air transport enable beneficial activities such as Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), business clusters and specialisation,*



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as well as creating other positive spill-over effects. Air connectivity facilitates productivity benefits by boosting international trade’. It’s self evident from this statement that North Wales and Cheshire need rail connectivity the airport to fully exploit the international economic opportunity. Relying on an increasingly congested M56 will only act as a constraint.

- The economy along the corridor stretching from the airport to Holyhead makes an annual GVA contribution of £35bn to the UK economy. There are major international companies that have operations along this corridor including Airbus, Toyota, General Motors, Warwick International, Tata Steel, JCB Transmissions, Bank of America, and BASF. All of these companies and others like them need access to the airport and have the option of an alternative to road. Better connectivity will increase the likelihood of further investment in the region as well as attracting new companies.
- The new nuclear power plant at Wylfa Newydd will be one of the biggest civil engineering projects in the UK. There is significant Japanese and Chinese input to this project and currently their personnel are finding it easier to fly into Heathrow and take the train from London to North Wales. They need to have the option of flying into Manchester and then taking the train to North Wales.
- North Wales and Chester have 3 Universities: Bangor, Glyndwr (Wrexham) and the University of Chester. International students and staff are vitally important to universities – and to the wider economy. Demand from international students can support the provision of certain strategically important subjects, for example in engineering, technology and computer science. This is particularly the case at postgraduate level, where around half of all students are from outside the European Union. In 2013–14, International students accounted for 13% of university income and Non-EU students contributed an estimated £7.2 billion to UK exports in 2011-12. Having easy public transport access to centres of education is essential for attracting international students and staff in the first instance. Not having rail access into North Wales from the airport makes the 3 regional Universities much less attractive compared to other centres of education in the north. Consequently the region loses out on the economic benefits that international students and staff can offer and is another reason, why rail access from the airport is needed.
- North Wales is a major tourist destination and has a much to offer the international visitor. However, the difficulty of travelling to North Wales from the airport by rail compared to other popular tourist areas such as Yorkshire and Cumbria, which have direct rail connectivity means that this market opportunity is difficult to capitalise on. The tourism economy in North Wales is worth £1.8bn annually and employs 40,000 people. If the international visitor market could be opened up with direct rail connectivity from the airport then both the economic value and employment in the region could be significantly increased.
- For North Wales / Cheshire / North Shropshire is a natural catchment area for the airport’s business, leisure, intercontinental, European, and domestic flights. With the possible exception of Liverpool John Lennon airport, which is not any nearer, there is no other option for passengers from those areas. While the airport is a major international gateway for the north of the UK there are other airports in the north



of England at Leeds/Bradford, Doncaster, Humberside, East Midlands, Teesside, and Newcastle all serving their respective catchment areas and serving the business and leisure markets to a range of domestic and European destinations. Allocating additional rail access to the airport from other parts of northern England undermines the business case for these other regional airports.

- The extension of North Wales rail services to the airport is consistent with The Manchester Airport Ground Access Plan – part of their Master Plan to 2030. One excerpt is *‘Changing Behaviour Lies At the Heart of Our Strategy. We need to reduce our dependence on the car and secure a major increase in public transport use’*. Furthermore, in the section Delivering the Strategy - Rail it states: *‘For air passengers, rail provides the best alternative to private car, especially for longer distance trips’*. We wholeheartedly agree with this and the ATW proposals are an obvious means of supporting the Airport with this objective.
- Although North Wales & Cheshire have the benefit of the M56 Motorway link directly to the airport, sections are reaching capacity. The *‘One North A proposition for an Interconnected North’* report published in July 2014 states that *‘with the majority of people arriving by car, road access to Manchester Airport is a major strategic issue with the M56 forecast to be close to capacity by 2015’*. The same report also states *‘...we cannot expect the existing highway network to bear the brunt of expected demand growth’*. This is compelling evidence for promoting modal shift to rail and supporting the Arrive Trains Wales proposals for increasing the frequency of North Wales – Manchester Airport services.

In conclusion the Board believes that these are compelling reasons, why the ATW application for specified services to be extended through to the airport should be approved. They would confer significant economic and transport benefits not just to North Wales but also to the wider economy. This is a low cost/zero cost improvement option that would deliver these benefits in the short term. As a consequence the Board would reiterate its’ strong support for the ATW proposal application.

For any communication with the Board regarding this scheme your point of contact will be John Rooney contactable on ; mobile or email

Yours sincerely,



Councillor Dilwyn Roberts

Chair, the North Wales Economic Ambition Board and Leader Conwy County Borough Council.



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