

May 2010

Letter to SEWTA

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am writing on behalf of **CAERPHILLY GREENDOORSTEP ENVIRONMENTAL GROUP**. **Some of our aims are to improve social inclusion and lower the production of greenhouse gases in Caerphilly Basin area.** In order to do this we are trying to improve the public transport provision in Caerphilly Basin to access employment at sites outside the Basin. This is vitally important as Caerphilly Basin has probably the highest out-commuting rates of all towns in South East Wales.

Some time ago we had discussions with our Assembly Minister and Assembly Deputy Transport Minister at the time, Tamsin Dunwoody-Kneafsey, regarding the reduction in bus services out of Caerphilly Basin to access employment in the Cardiff and Trefforest areas. May I stress that we are not referring to bus services within the Basin which formed part of the kick-start scheme. That scheme did not aid travel outside the area, so did not improve accessibility to the job market.

The outcome of that meeting was very disappointing in that they claimed they were powerless to influence private commercial bus operations. They indicated that they had empowered SEWTA to develop the necessary improvements to the bus network.

Since that time we have witnessed more reductions in services out of Caerphilly Basin and we feel that now is the time to contact SEWTA regarding these issues. May we meet with SEWTA to discuss the above matter?

For the last 18 months we have been involved with the Caerphilly LDP and are concerned that no serious plans have been proposed that will bring about a reduction in the need to travel nor move people out of their cars onto public transport. The impression given in the LDP is that increased rail travel from Caerphilly to Cardiff is the answer to the out-commuting problem and no attention is being paid to the bus network. Rail travel is not the solution to the travel problems in Caerphilly Basin.

We have carried out an extensive public transport accessibility profile of all the communities in Caerphilly Basin and showed that at least 75% of

people in the Basin need to travel for at least 2 hrs per day to access employment, even to sites in central Cardiff .

The example we used was the Assembly building in Cathays Park (fairly central). The data was gained from Traveline Cymru website and verified with up-to-date timetables and local knowledge. Cost of fares was another issue.

E.g. A combined rail/bus weekly ticket for Caerphilly Basin being £26.30. Yet on the same rail route, the cost to Blackwood (another 10 miles further) it is only £18.80. After reading the transport proposals in the LDP and SEWTA's strategy we feel that no-one seems to appreciate the public transport problems in Caerphilly Basin. Only recently we became aware that SEWTA were carrying out a public consultation exercise for their regional transport plan. If we had known about this we would have made a contribution. We are hoping now that we could have some discussions on this subject.

The first thing we would like to discuss is the omission of the A468 - A470 Cardiff route from Caerphilly as part of a strategic corridor. This route probably carries as much traffic from the Rhymney Valley to Cardiff as the A469 but only has an hourly bus service along some of the route. We believe that the 3mile stretch between Caerphilly and Nantgarw is a weak link in the public transport network.

We also believe that this corridor has great potential to increase bus usage and speed up bus travel to Cardiff. The corridor has been subject to a great deal of housing development, employment and leisure (multiplex cinema at Nantgarw) over the last 10 yrs and the hourly number 26 bus route has been under-achieving. This may be due to the fact that the route was operated by 2 different companies and there was not full interchange ability of tickets with other bus routes in the area. We feel we have many ideas for this route and a discussion would be very useful.

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