

To:

European Commission
DG Energy and Transport
TEN-T
B-1049 Brussels

23rd April 2009

Dear Sir/Madam

Cardiff Council welcomes the opportunity to respond to the consultation on the TEN-T Green Paper. Due to the short time available before the deadline for submission of this response, we will take this opportunity to briefly highlight some key issues that are particularly critical to the future of Cardiff and the South Wales region.

Cardiff and South Wales occupy a peripheral position within the Atlantic Arc area of Europe. The development of world class transport connections with London and mainland Europe are essential if the city/region is to continue build and maintain its competitiveness within EU and global markets, particularly in light of the eastward pull of economic investment and EU Structural Fund support towards the EU accession countries in Eastern Europe.

The development of a High Speed Rail corridor between London and South Wales (and South West of England) is critical in this context, and in light of evidence from France and other EU countries where High Speed Rail connections have brought considerable benefits to peripheral areas. Provision of rapid rail connections to South Wales, can also provide enhanced connectivity through southern Wales between mainland Europe and the south of Ireland.

Recent announcements by the UK government have signalled a commitment to develop a further High Speed Rail connection between London and the English West Midlands, following on from the success of the London-Channel Tunnel High Speed Rail corridor. While this commitment is welcomed as a step in the right direction, public and private sector bodies in various regions of the UK (including Wales and Scotland) are concerned that the UK Government's incremental approach to developing High Speed Rail capacity carries no guarantee that High Speed Rail connections will ever reach remoter parts of the UK, where they are greatly needed to support future growth and economic competitiveness.

In light of above, it is important that a revised TEN-T policy provides a framework to enable peripheral regions within the Atlantic Arc area to secure the investment necessary to improve transport connectivity and thus to address the economic disadvantages arising from their peripheral location. In this respect, while we would support the principle of TEN-T working around a 'priority network', we think that prioritisation of investment decisions through the future TEN-T policy framework will need to strike a balance between, on the one hand, tackling problems of congestion and blockages on busier parts national transport networks, and on the other, improving the connectivity of remoter regions through network enhancement (and thus helping to boost the development and economic competitiveness of those areas). This issue is particularly critical in the context of Cardiff's aspirations for High Speed Rail connections between London and South Wales.

I hope these comments will be useful to you, but please do not hesitate to contact me should you have any queries.

Yours sincerely,

Matthew Price

Matthew Price

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