

National Assembly For Wales

Public Accounts Committee Inquiry

Value for Money of Motorway and Trunk road Investment



1. Sefydliad Siartredig Priffyrdd a Chludiant Gogledd Cymru
2. The Freight Transport Association is one of Britain's largest trade associations, and uniquely provides a voice for the entirety of the UK's logistics sector. Its role, on behalf of nearly 14,000 members, is to enhance the safety, efficiency and sustainability of freight movements across the supply chain, regardless of transport mode. FTA members operate over 200,000 goods vehicles - almost half the UK fleet - and some 1,000,000 liveried vans. In addition, they consign over 90 per cent of the freight moved by rail and over 70 per cent of sea and air freight. FTA works with its members to influence transport policy and decisions taken at local, national and European level to ensure they recognise the needs of industry's supply chains. FTA remains available to discuss any aspect of this submission.
3. The Association is grateful for the opportunity to respond to the National Assembly for Wales, Public Accounts Committee Inquiry into the Value for Money of Motorway and Trunk Road Investment.
4. The Freight Transport Association is not in a position to comment on the effectiveness of the Welsh Governments planning and costing of individual schemes or Trunk Road Agents, however over the course of the past year FTA members have reported (via a quarterly survey) that they believe the performance of the road network in Great Britain has deteriorated with a reduction in reliability of 55 per cent on the motorway network and 45 per cent on urban roads reported in Q4 2014.
5. The freight industry is heavily reliant on the transport infrastructure that it uses, performing to a consistently high standard. Distribution networks, delivery routes and schedules have been designed to achieve availability of sufficient goods at the point of consumption by business or consumers without the need for extensive and expensive stock holding. Operators build resilience into their operational planning to accommodate regularly encountered journey time unreliability and seasonal changes in network performance.
6. Efficient and effective road networks are crucial for the logistics industry to be able to support the needs of UK businesses. More than 80 per cent of goods go by road and as the economy recovers, the demands placed on the road network will only increase.
7. FTA members have been critical regarding the failure to communicate planned road works, It is essential that development / repairs to the route network which results in significant closures and diversions are communicated to users. Communication is key to ensuring a smooth transition ahead of and during works. Information needs to be accurate and concise. Failure to meet this requirement could result in congestion, with increased vehicles emissions, additional mileage, missed deliveries, refused loads or a failure to meet guaranteed delivery times.
8. It is essential therefore that when road works are planned or new roads built, road users know where to access this information or have already been informed. The Traffic Wales website currently highlight works but it should also inform users of future planned works so that alternatives can be sort and where necessary provide further information on alternative arrangements for large vehicles. We believe the two Trunk Road Agents in Wales should provide more information on planned closures or provide clear links to sites like Traffic Wales where this information can be found.
9. The Freight Transport Association receive and are notified of planned developments on the Trunk Road network and respond accordingly after consultation with our members, this provides the Association with the opportunity to input into this process and works well. Delivery of projects and evaluation are then subject to a robust analysis using the WelTaG process which also provides further opportunity for stakeholder input.
10. The Welsh Government website provides stakeholders with an opportunity to find some information on the progress of trunk road schemes however this does need to be regularly updated.
11. FTA believes that a smarter approach to road financing should be adopted with the development of a funding strategy that covers short, medium and long term aims. This money must be secure from other pressures. Long term planning is essential.

12. In England the FTA work very closely with the Highways Agency and Government. The newly formed Strategic Highways Company (Highways England) will go live this year taking over responsibility for operating, managing, maintaining and improving the strategic roads from the Highways Agency. And for the first time England and the new company will benefit from a 'Road Investment Strategy' which sets out a stable, long term investment plan for strategic roads, providing a clear vision , performance standards and delivery expectations to be met by the by the new company. It is too early to say that this approach has worked however FTA believe that the Welsh Government must adopt best practice and potentially this modal for Wales.

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