

Enterprise and Business Committee
National Assembly for Wales
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29th January 2016

Re: Rugby World Cup Transport Planning report December 2015

Dear Sir,

Railfuture Cymru / Wales wishes to comment on the Rugby World Cup Transport Planning Report because it does not reflect in full what happened on 19th and 20th September 2015.

The report did not gather information as to how the disruption affected passengers not attending the rugby matches, who were making journeys on trains to and from and across Cardiff, although reports were available for consideration. There were a considerable number of passengers making holiday travel journeys in September, often with heavy luggage. The Abergavenny food festival which was held on 19th September generated additional passengers. We note there was no input from Transport Focus.

The train operators estimated that no rugby supporter queued for more than two hours although some queues lasted for up to four hours. However passengers on trains from the east which were on time at Newport were delayed for one and a half hours with passengers missing onward connections from Cardiff and having their journey times extended by over two hours. There were also delays and cancellations to services arriving Cardiff from West Wales.

First Great Western (now Great Western Railway) stated that on 19th September cancellations and delays to their services from Swansea to Cardiff had to be introduced. They also stated that this also affected customers travelling west from Newport. A total of 18 FGW services were affected.

Pre match planning produced a protocol protecting scheduled services for passengers not attending the rugby matches at Cardiff. However this was not fully implemented on 19th and 20th September.

Arriva Trains Wales provided excellent publicity about the matches and advised passengers to avoid travelling on these days, however for many it is difficult to alter pre-arranged plans or work commitments. This publicity was not made available to other parts of the rail network outside the area covered by Arriva Trains Wales.

A Railfuture committee member was involved in a delay to a west bound train, 17.30 Manchester to Cardiff on 19th September, which took almost two hours to travel between Newport and Cardiff with a ninety minute late arrival at Cardiff. The conductor on the train

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informed passengers of the causes for the delay and the number of trains waiting in front for access to Cardiff Central station. The conductor also further updated passengers during the delay. Another member reported a delay of one hour to a journey from Penarth to Abergavenny while a third reported that some FGW trains omitted stopping at Severn Tunnel Junction because they were using trains too long to stop at the platforms.

The causes for the delays to westbound trains entering Cardiff Central station were:

- The use of platform 4 for reversing trains arriving from the east, then slow loading, before they returned to the east reduced considerably the capacity use of the platform. This applied especially to high capacity trains including those provided by Cross Country.
- Trains leaving platform 4 had to use the up relief line to Rumney River Bridge then using a slow speed crossover 25mph to reach the up fast line. This produced a conflicting move at Rumney River Bridge
- The Cardiff East Junction had been placed out of use and partly replaced by a new junction further away from Cardiff Central station at Moorland Road. This removed the flexibility to divert trains to either platform 3 or 4 nearer to Cardiff Central.
- This only left platform 3 available for terminating trains from the east and for trains continuing to west of Cardiff along the main line.

The Track Map included in the Great Western Railway presentation was out of date and did not reflect the current layout. An accurate map should have been included in the report to give a better understanding of the (temporary) restricted layout east of Cardiff. At Christmas /New Year 2015-6 Network Rail reinstated part of the Cardiff East Junction layout with two additional crossovers and inserted a new point enabling access to/from the relief lines to platform 2. This is a much improved layout and when commissioned should solve most of the problems outlined above.

There is no report from British Transport Police who could have given details of their involvement in crowd control. It may be relevant that there had been an earlier post World Cup rugby match incident at Twickenham involving a crowded platform and a passenger falling onto a running line. This may have caused extra precautions to be in place.

Delays to trains can affect subsequent workings of the trains and the staff availability for the following day.

The delays on 19th and 20th were confined to main line trains and Arriva Trains Wales Valley line services appeared to be unaffected. This would not have been the case if main line services had been diverted to platforms 6 and 7.

We are concerned that the remapping of the Wales and Borders franchise could result in additional Train Operating Companies serving Cardiff. This would increase the complexities of planning for events. We recommend that all operators serving Cardiff should have written into their franchise agreement or management contract that they make adequate provision for serving special events in Cardiff. This should be added as a recommendation to your report.

There were reports of east bound traffic congestion on the M4 after the matches on the 19th and 20th with delays of over an hour on the approaches to the new Severn Bridge. The effect on road transport both for the event and normal travel was not mentioned in your report.

We support the Committee's recommendations with the following reservations.

- Recommendation 4: There is no large coach park near the Stadium and road traffic can also encounter delays.
- Recommendation 5: The Central Square development should have more shelter for those waiting to access the station.
- Recommendation 8: We do not support the use of Cardiff Queen Street station other than for the use passengers to Valley line destinations north of Cardiff. We consider that Ninian Park station should however be considered for development and also for use by slow boarding charter trains.

We suggest two additional recommendations:

- Recommendation 9: ATW pre-match publicity should also adopted by other train operators.
- Recommendation 10: We recommend that all operators serving Cardiff should have written into their franchise agreement or management contract that they make adequate provision for serving special events in Cardiff.

Yours faithfully,

Rowland Pittard

Rowland Pittard
Secretary
Railfuture Cymru