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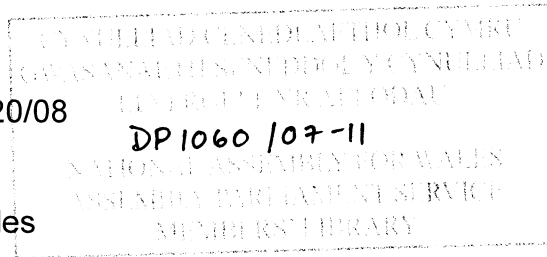
Y Gwir Anrh/Rt Hon Rhodri Morgan AC/AM
Prif Weinidog Cymru/First Minister for Wales



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru
Welsh Assembly Government

Ein cyf/Our ref MB/FM/0120/08

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February 2008

I promised to write to you following your question during First Minister's Question's session on 22 January 2008. The issue you raised was the increase in Arriva Trains Wales's fares from 2 January 2008.

As I said in my answer, Arriva Trains Wales increased its regulated and unregulated fares by an average of 4.8 per cent from 2 January 2008. Regulated fares include saver tickets, day returns and season tickets. They are determined by Government. For a number of years, the UK Government determined this and there was a policy that increases should be capped to RPI inflation minus one per cent. From January 2004, the policy has been of a cap of RPI inflation plus one per cent. The Welsh Assembly Government has been responsible for this policy since it took up its powers under the Railways Act 2005. To date, we have not adopted a different policy on annual caps from that of the UK Government.

Changes to unregulated fares are a matter for Train Operating Companies to decide. As you will note, ATW has been consistent in terms of the percentage increase for both regulated and unregulated fares.

Your core concern was that Arriva Trains Wales's fares increases would be a deterrent to the Assembly Government achieving its aim of switching people from car to public transport.

In the first place, Arriva Trains Wales has invested in a range of improvements. This includes extra trains and services, considerable performance and punctuality improvements, refurbishment of carriages and investment in train cleaning.

The customer satisfaction ratings on these very important issues increased by 5% to an overall score of 85% according to the latest National Passenger Survey. Punctuality is currently very good, with over 90% of all journeys arriving within 5 minutes of the advertised timetable.

Arriva Trains Wales introduced 12 modern class 175 trains into its fleet from December 2006 as direct replacement for the equivalent number of older class 158 trains. The trains are deployed on the west Wales to Manchester service group and the Cardiff to Holyhead services. ATW considerably improved their fleet in 2007 which included the internal refurbishment of the 150 units and deep cleans and repairs on the 158's. The opening of

the new Machynlleth depot last year will further improve the presentation of the ATW fleet. In 2008 there are plans for a refurbishment of some of the 175 units.

As a result of these improvements, Wales continues to experience an extremely high increase in demand for train travel.