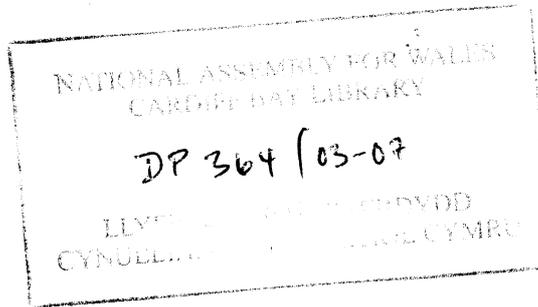


Rt Hon Rhodri Morgan AM
First Minister/Prif Weinidog Cymru



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru
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Ms Jenny Randerson AM
National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay
CF99 1NA

July 2003

Dear Jenny

I am writing in response to the questions you raised with me in plenary on 24 June regarding Cardiff County Council's new policy document on transport, 'Keeping Cardiff Moving'.

I would like first to make a few general points on the document. It contains ambitious plans and Cardiff Council should be commended for looking at innovative ways of delivering their transport agenda. We are always ready to support new approaches to funding transport developments and are happy to work with the County Council in taking forward practical solutions. The development of a public private partnership on this scale will need careful appraisal to determine its value for money and I am glad to say that Robin Shaw, the Director of Transport, has been invited to join the project panel.

You also raised two specific points relating to the document: whether I agreed that any plans by Cardiff to introduce congestion charging in the city centre should only be introduced once a fully efficient and accessible public transport system is in place and whether I agreed that the income from congestion charging should be used to improve public transport and not to subsidise road building projects.

The Council maintains in its document that they would not introduce congestion charging until there has been significant improvements in the local transport infrastructure. The Welsh Assembly Government agrees with that view. We would be responsible for approving any charging scheme and we would want to see major improvements in bus and rail services into Cardiff before a scheme is considered. The introduction of park and ride schemes, dedicated bus



BUDDSODDWR MEWN POBL
INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

lanes and quality bus partnerships agreed between local authorities and bus operators, would be essential.

On your point about how money raised from charging schemes should be spent, the Transport Act 2000, which introduced the concept of charging schemes, sets out the policy on this. Authorities that introduce schemes will be allowed to retain any revenue from the scheme for up to ten years after the scheme commences. Revenue must be spent on transport improvements which have been included in the Authority's Local Transport Plan. The Eastern Bay Link Road is a key proposal in Cardiff's local transport plan.

The Act also allows the Assembly to issue guidance to local authorities on appraising whether the improvements to which they put their share of the proceeds offer value for money. The authority must then have regard to this guidance when deciding how to apply their share of the revenue, which could include funding roads or public transport developments.

I hope this clarifies the position and thank you for bringing this issue to my attention.

Yours

Rhodri



Rt Hon Rhodri Morgan AM
First Minister/Prif Weinidog Cymru

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7 July 2003

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