

[National Assembly for Wales](#)

[Enterprise and Business Committee](#)

[Inquiry into the future of the Wales and Borders Rail](#)

Evidence from James Macduff – WBF 43

To the Enterprise Committee

I have lived in Llanilar, near Aberystwyth, for 21 years, and I would like to make two comments in response to your public consultation about the future of rail services in mid and West Wales:

1. I would like to add my support to the calls for an hourly rail service from Aberystwyth to Shrewsbury, on the basis that it will stimulate sorely needed economic development in the region. As a user of this line, I am aware that there is a consistently large demand for these rail services. Even more useful would be an improvement to the line itself which would cut journey time. At present it takes 2 hours to get from Aberystwyth to Shrewsbury, and 3 hours to Birmingham.

2. I would also like to see the restoration of a direct Mid-Wales to South-Wales rail link within Wales (e.g. reconstruction/re-routing of the Aberystwyth to Carmarthen line). There has been little sign since devolution of any serious efforts by the Welsh Assembly to address and improve the terribly inadequate transport links between the South and the North of Wales. This inadequacy is diminishing economic development of mid-Wales, and maintains the significantly deleterious 'divide' between the South and the rest of the country. It should, at last, be addressed. In fact, I am surprised that the Welsh Assembly Government has not made North – South transport links a priority in Wales, as a way of unifying the country, politically, socially and economically.

With the current shorter total journey times and greater convenience of rail services from Aberystwyth to Shrewsbury, Chester, Telford or Birmingham, compared with Cardiff and Swansea, is it surprising that people from Mid-Wales choose to shop for the day in England rather than in Cardiff? Again, a

no-brainer in terms of economic development of Cardiff, the Assembly's perennially favoured son!

Yours faithfully,
James Macduff