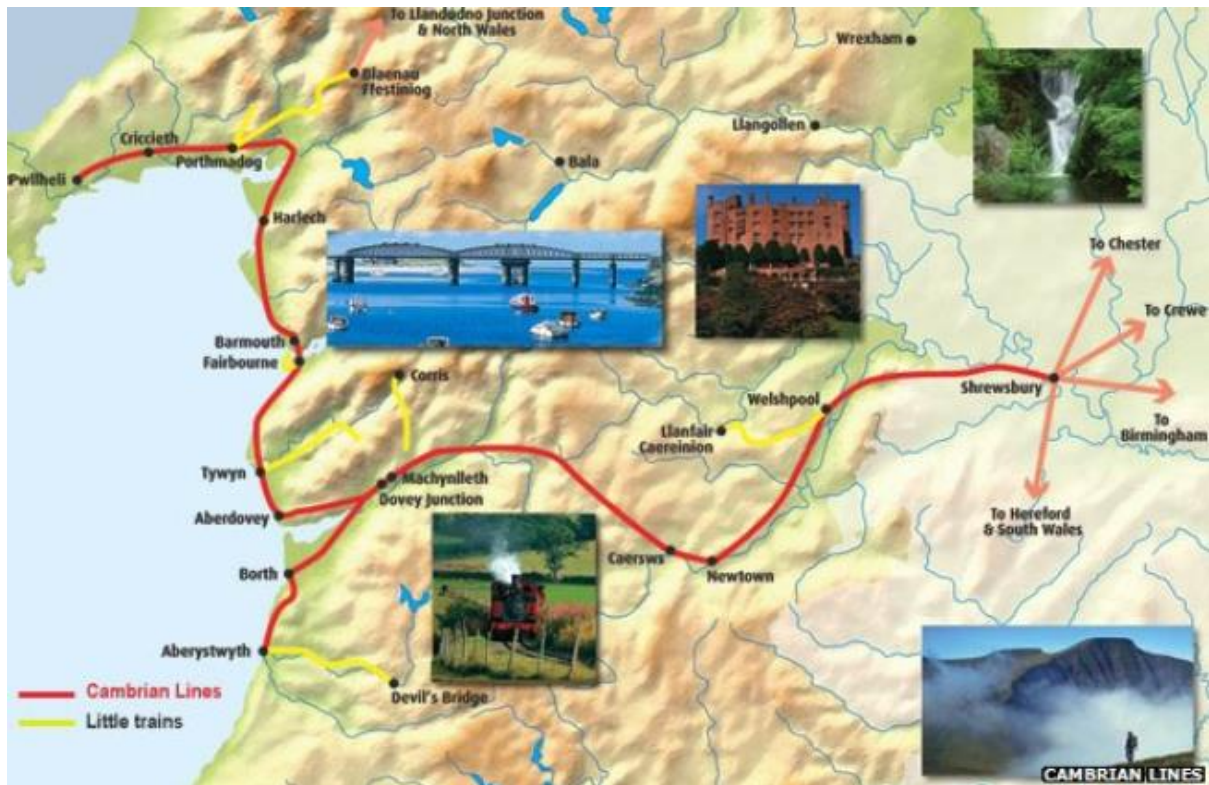


SHREWSBURY ABERYSTWYTH RAIL LIASON COMMITTEE
WITH THE
CAMBRIAN COAST CONFERENCE



CAMBRIAN LINES FRANCHISE 2018

FINAL DRAFT FOR COMMENT

For Edwina Hart MBE CStJ AM

Cllr Mansel Williams Chair
Cllr Trevor Roberts Vice Chair
Robert Robinson Secretary

Cllr Selwyn Griffiths Chair
Cllr Eryl Jones - Williams Vice

6th February 2015

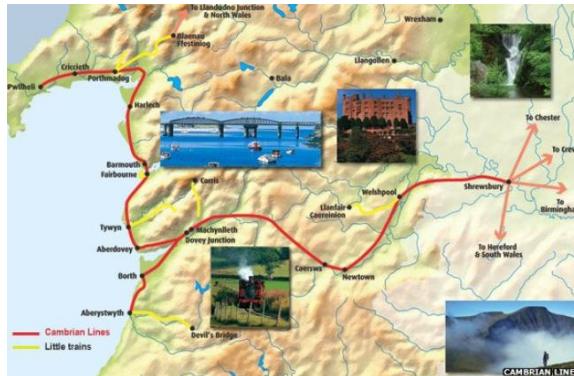
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1. Introduction

1.1 The Cambrian Lines

1.11 This report is to inform the Minister of the combined views of the Shrewsbury Aberystwyth Railway Liaison Committee and the Cambrian Coast Conference with regard to the 2018 Franchise. The report presents for consideration a number of recommendations for the future of the Cambrian Lines.

1.12 There has been a new signalling system (ERTMS) for the line completed in 2013 which allows for improvements to the line to take place.

1.2 The current service delivery

1.21 The current railway services comprise a two hourly service on the main line (Shrewsbury to Aberystwyth & Aberystwyth to Birmingham International - 7 services) and an almost two hourly service on the coast line (Machynlleth to Pwllheli) with 5 services on weekdays extended between Pwllheli and Birmingham International, but a much reduced service on Sundays and during the winter months.

1.22 The number of passengers has increased substantially over the past 10 years with no significant improvement to the service. However in May 2015 - 9 extra services are planned to be added to the existing service.

1.23 The timetables which are planned to take effect from May 2015 are set out at appendix B.

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- 1.24 The current trains are class 158's and are fitted with the European Rail Train Management System (ERTMS) which restricts the type of train that can run on the Cambrian Lines. Only those fitted with the system can run on the lines.
- 1.25 The on board facilities are reasonable but improvements are sought as set out in this report.

1.3 Survey work carried out in October 2013

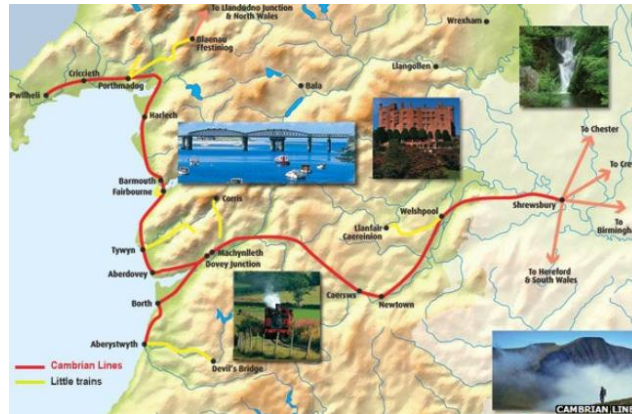
- 1.31 In October 2013 there was an extensive survey of the Cambrian Lines prepared by the Shrewsbury Aberystwyth Rail Liaison Committee for the Welsh Government and the evidence gained from this work forms the basis of the recommendations contained in this report. A copy of the summary of that report is set out at appendix A.
- 1.32 The Shrewsbury Aberystwyth Railway Liaison Committee and the Cambrian Coast Conference have also sought the views of the public along the line by means of a line-wide survey which the Joint committee has carried out.
- 1.33 The members of the Shrewsbury Aberystwyth Rail Liaison Committee and Cambrian Coast Conference include:

- Powys, Gwynedd, Ceredigion & Shropshire Councils
- Town and Community Councils along the lines
- Interest groups (Rail Future, SARPA, Tallylyn Railway)
- Network Rail
- British Transport Police
- Mid Wales Tourism
- TraCC
- Cambrian Railways Partnership
- Aberystwyth University

1.4 Report from the Cambrian Lines

- 1.41 This report sets out the recommendations of both the Shrewsbury Aberystwyth Rail Liaison Committee and Cambrian Line Conference for consideration by the Minister and her officials when awarding the 2018 Franchise.

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2. The story so far

2.1 Working with the Minister

2.11 The Joint Committee has had the privilege of working with the Minister, her officials, Arriva Trains Wales and Network Rail to deliver the improved timetable planned for commencement in May 2015.

2.12 The Cambrian Lines Implementation Group has been supported by a Support Group which has met regularly to inform the Implementation Group as improvements have progressed.

2.13 The executive working with the Minister comprises:
Cllr Mansell Williams Chair
Cllr Trevor Roberts vice Chair
Rhydian Mason Rail Development Officer
Robert Robinson Secretary

2.2 The ERTMS rail signalling system and other infrastructure improvements

The Cambrian Lines have received substantial investment in the past five years with the introduction of the ERTMS signalling system as well as some station improvements at Shrewsbury, Aberystwyth and some of the intermediate stations along the route.

2.3 The improved rail services for the Cambrian Lines

The improved rail service for the Cambrian Lines is set out at appendix B.

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2.4 Surveys and evidence

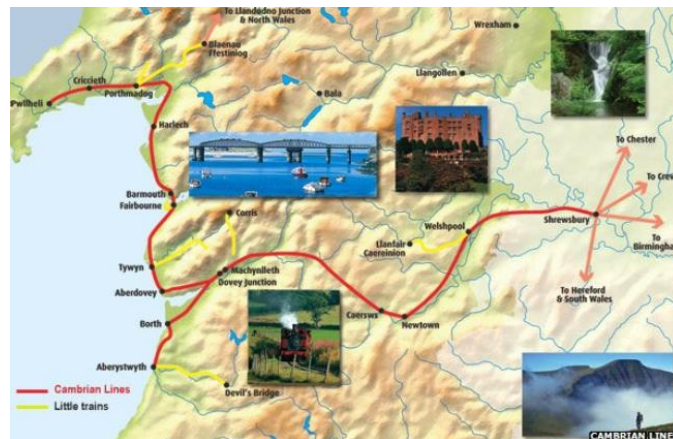
- 2.4.1 The survey carried out in October 2013 is available in full with a summary of the results set out at appendix A.
- 2.4.2 There is further survey work to be carried out in October 2015 to assess the effect of the new improved rail timetable for the Cambrian Lines.

2.5 Future for the Cambrian Lines

- 2.5.1 Train travel is increasing throughout the UK and the Cambrian Lines fully reflect this trend. This increased rail passenger traffic needs to be taken into account when looking into the future.
- 2.5.2 This report sets out the views of the authors with regard to the following aspects of the Cambrian Lines and trains through to the West Midlands and other areas accessed via Shrewsbury:

- Main Line improvements – Shrewsbury to Aberystwyth
- Coast Line improvements – Machynlleth to Pwllheli
- Station and infrastructure improvements
- Tourism and Tourist Trains

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3. Shrewsbury Aberystwyth Railway Line

3.1 The line

The line runs from Birmingham International via Shrewsbury to Aberystwyth. The intermediate stations between Shrewsbury and Aberystwyth include Welshpool, Newtown, Caersws, Machynlleth, Dovey Junction and Borth.

3.2 The issues

The issues which affect the line currently include:

- i) The timetable and need for a full hourly train service
- ii) The capacity of trains on some services - Overcrowding
- iii) The need for further station improvements
- iv) The consideration of extra station stops along the route
- v) The needs of Aberystwyth University
- vi) The needs for business and access for tourism in Mid Wales

3.3 Improved rail services

The authors accept that the much improved rail services expected in May 2015 are significant and go a long way to helping the current timetable problems and should not only provide a better service but also reduce overcrowding and provide better access to Mid Wales.

3.4 The case for additional stations

The authors of this report will only support the re-opening of any stations if a robust business case has been submitted to the Joint Committee and that any new facility does not in any way impede the introduction of a full hourly train service on the main line.

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3.5 Survey and evidence

In October 2013 the Shrewsbury Aberystwyth Rail Liaison Committee conducted an extensive survey of need for extra services at the request of the Welsh Government Minister.

The details of this survey are available and give a sound evidence base for the recommendations contained within this report.

3.6 Summary

The summary of recommendations for this part of the report is as follows:

- i) The introduction of a full hourly train service from Aberystwyth to Birmingham International.
- ii) The introduction of a 7-day-a-week timetable.
- iii) The need to provide an adequate passenger seating on every train and with additional seating capacity during certain peak periods.

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4. Cambrian Coast Railway Line

4.1 The line

The main line runs from Birmingham International via Shrewsbury to Machynlleth where the train divides.

The coast line then travels from Machynlleth to Pwllheli via the principle stations of Aberdovey, Tywyn, Fairbourne, Barmouth, Harlech, Minffordd, Porthmadog, Criccieth and Pwllheli. There are many intermediate request stops.

4.2 The issues

The issues which affect the line currently include:

- i) The seating capacity on some services – in particular during busy periods
- ii) The timetable and need for a full hourly train service
- iii) The need for further station improvements including Harrington Humps to aid access for all Passengers and DDA access compliance for disabled and elderly at all stations
- iv) Lack of a 7-day-a-week timetable

4.3 Improved rail services

It is the considered view of the Joint committee that the expected improvements to the service along the Cambrian Coast Line from May 2015 are hugely welcomed, but that there needs to be further improvement to both the Winter and Summer services to address the key issues of employment and economic development in mid-Wales for which the railway is the key to addressing.

4.4 Survey and evidence

The survey carried out in October 2013 is available in full with a summary of the results set out at appendix A.

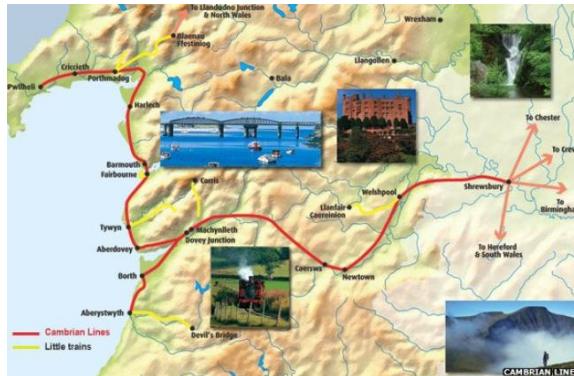
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4.5 Summary

The summary of recommendations for this part of the report is as follows:

- i) The continuation of a full two hourly train service from Machynlleth to Pwllheli Stations
- ii) The trains during the summer months need to connect/link with trains between Machynlleth and Aberystwyth.
- iii) The introduction of a 7-day-a-week-timetable in the summer months.
- iv) The introduction of adequate passenger seating on every train and with extra capacity provided during certain peak periods.

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5.Trains

5.1 The current position

The current stock used on the Cambrian Lines is class 158 units. Some have been refurbished but all do not provided for the needs of the 21st century traveller.

5.2 Customer requests

From the survey work carried out in 2013 the following were requested by a large number of those travelling on the Main and Coast Lines as follows:

- i) WiFi on trains
- ii) Better on board catering (every train with a trolley service)
- iii) Power Points working for laptop and IPad use

5.3 Survey and evidence

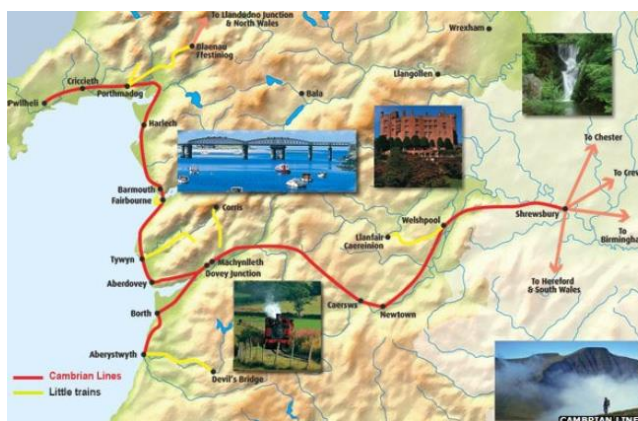
The survey carried out in October 2013 is available in full with a summary of the results set out at appendix A.

5.4 Summary

The summary of recommendations for this part of the report is as follows:

- i) WiFi should be provided on all trains
- ii) Power points should be provided on all trains
- iii) All trains should be of main line standard and not local standard.
- iv) Additional cycle storage on trains would be desirable to support the tourism created particularly by the Welsh Coastal path used for both walking and cycling.

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6. Stations and infrastructure

6.1 Audit

- 6.11 A station audit has been carried out with the needed improvements identified for each of the main line and coast line stations.
- 6.12 An audit of permanent way improvements has also been completed identifying those areas in need of review.

6.2 Improvements required

- 6.21 The station improvements required are set out at appendix C and include
- 6.22 The permanent way improvements needed to effect the recommendations contained in this report are:
 - i) A need for signalling additions to allow trains to leave platform 3 at Shrewsbury towards Birmingham International (currently trains from Birmingham International can enter Platform 3 at Shrewsbury but cannot leave towards Birmingham international).

6.3 Support transport

The need for better bus integration with trains has been identified and a plan for introducing such improvements should be completed before 2018 in order to maximise the potential for connections using multi-modal methods of transport. TrawsCymru and LA Subsidised services could integrate better in terms of 'connecting' with trains at stations on the Cambrian Lines – Machynlleth, Newtown, Welshpool in particular.

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6.4 Survey and evidence

The survey carried out in October 2013 is available in full with a summary of the results set out at appendix A.

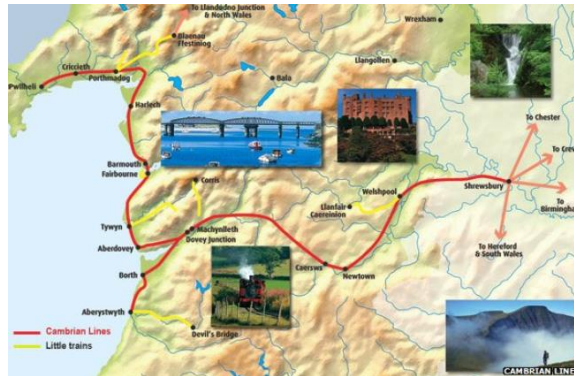
6.5 Summary

The summary of recommendations for this part of the report is as follows:

Station infrastructure

- i) The issue of car parking needs to be assessed and adequate provision made at all principle stations on both the Main and Coast lines.
- ii) Improvements to the real time information on the display boards at stations.
- iii) The authors of this report will only support the re-opening of any stations if a robust business case has been submitted to the Joint Committee and that any new facility does not in any way impede the introduction of a full hourly train service on the main line.
- iv) All information should be provided should be present bi-lingual.
- v) Dovey Junction station has a car park which needs to have access, this should be reviewed.

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7. Tourist Trains

7.1 History and current position

7.11 The Cambrian Coast has for many years (until 2013) had the benefit of the Tourist Steam and charter trains which formed an important part of the Tourism base along the coast. This has ceased due to the new ERTMS signalling system and the lack of a mobile unit. This also prevents any other units not equipped for ERTMS from running on the line.

7.12 The need for the introduction of a Tourist Train Service is very important for the coastal towns.

7.2 ETRMS Mobile Unit

The introduction of a Portable ERTMS Unit is essential not only to allow Tourist and Charter trains to return but to give a more robust service on the main line and coast line.

7.3 Tourism on the Cambrian Coast

Tourism on the Coast has reduced due to the loss of the Tourist Trains and these should be re-introduced as soon as possible to support Tourism along the Coast.

7.4 Survey and evidence

In October 2013 the Shrewsbury Aberystwyth Rail Liaison Committee conducted an extensive survey along the line for the Welsh Government Minister.

The details of this survey are available and give a sound evidence base for the recommendations contained within this report.

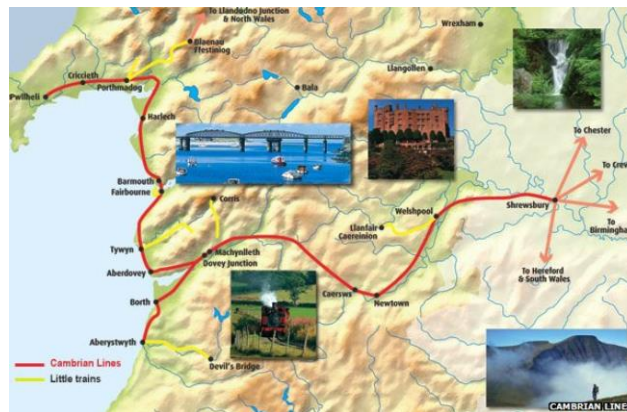
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7.5 Summary

The summary of recommendations for this part of the report is as follows:

- i) To re-introduce Tourist and Charter train services along the Coast Lines (steam if possible) as soon as possible.

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8. Evidence for recommendations

8.1 Survey and evidence base

In October 2013 the Shrewsbury Aberystwyth Rail Liaison Committee conducted an extensive survey along the line for the Welsh Government Minister.

The details of this survey are available and give a sound evidence base for the recommendations listed below.

8.2 List of documents

The documents cited in this report are available upon request as follows:

1. Report no 1 to Minister dated
2. Report no 2 to Minister dated
3. Report no 3 to Minister dated
4. Report no 4 to Minister dated
5. Survey carried out in October 2013

A copy of the summary of results is set out at appendix A.

The revised timetable in place from May 2015 is set out at appendix B.

8.3 Consultation

The following were consulted in gaining evidence to support the recommendations in this report:

- i) The members of the Shrewsbury Aberystwyth Rail Liaison Committee.
- ii) The members of the Cambrian Coast Conference
- iii) The public and interest groups
- iv) The Town and Community Councils along both the main line and coast line.

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9. Recommendations

9.1 Summary

The survey carried out in October 2013 is available in full with a summary of the results set out at appendix A.

9.2 Recommendations

The following recommendations are put forward for consideration:

Shrewsbury Aberystwyth Rail Line

- i) The introduction of a full hourly train service from Aberystwyth to Birmingham International.
- ii) The introduction of a 7-day-a-week timetable.
- iii) The need to provide an adequate passenger seating on every train and with additional seating capacity during certain peak periods.

Cambrian Coast Line

- i) The continuation of a full two hourly train service from Machynlleth to Pwllheli Stations
- ii) The trains during the summer months need to connect/link with trains between Machynlleth and Aberystwyth.
- iii) The introduction of a 7-day-a-week-timetable in the summer months.
- iv) The introduction of adequate passenger seating on every train and with extra capacity provided during certain peak periods.

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Trains running on both the Main and Coast Lines

- i) WiFi should be provided on all trains
- ii) Power points should be provided on all trains
- iii) All trains should be of main line standard and not local standard.
 - v) Additional cycle storage on trains would be desirable to support the tourism created particularly by the Welsh Coastal path used for both walking and cycling.

Stations and infrastructure

- i) The issue of car parking needs to be assessed and adequate provision made at all principle stations on both the Main and Coast lines.
- ii) Improvements to the real time information on the display boards at stations.
- iii) The authors of this report will only support the re-opening of any stations if a robust business case has been submitted to the Joint Committee and that any new facility does not in any way impede the introduction of a full hourly train service on the main line.
- iv) All information should be provided should be present bi-lingual.
- v) Dovey Junction station has a car park which needs to have access, this should be reviewed.

Tourist Trains on Coast Line

- i) To re-introduce Tourist and Charter train services along the Coast Lines (steam if possible) as soon as possible.

The Joint Committee wish to express their appreciation of the opportunity which the Welsh Government Minister for Science, Economy and Transport, Mrs Edwina Hart has offered the communities of mid-Wales by requesting the earlier survey and the present report.

We would highly value the opportunity to discuss with the Minister and her Officers the findings of our survey and the recommendations in this report.

Cllr Mansel Williams & Cllr Selwyn Griffiths

RAR/06.02.2015