



North Pembrokeshire Transport Forum Fforwm Trafnidiaeth Gogledd Penfro

May News Briefing, 2019

Buses

New T11 TrawsCymru Service. This hourly Fishguard – St Davids – Haverfordwest service commenced operation from 7th May and is part of the TrawsCymru network. The service is 50% funded by the Welsh Government (WG) and provides a more direct town-to-town network using branded quality vehicles.

Community Transport

Pembrokeshire Association of Community Transport Operators (PACTO) update. 'Our new liftsharing project, Take Me Too, is very close to launch. The initial phase of the launch will be targeting drivers to sign up to be part of this new liftsharing community, with the full service launching this summer.

Otherwise, services are continuing as normal. We have seen a large increase in demand for transport provided as part of the PIVOT project (RVS volunteers provide transport home from hospital and settling in at home, in order to prevent the need for hospital admission / facilitate earlier discharge). This is in part linked to partnership working with British Red Cross who are providing support to patients within A&E'.

Preseli Rural Transport Association/Green Dragon update. 'Our Wheels2work scooter scheme is completely full at the moment, with a waiting list. We are still waiting to start our larger Wheels2work project. Our minibuses now all have ticket machines installed, and these are used on all our dial a ride and town rider services'.

National Assembly – Enterprise, Skills & Enterprise Committee

Introduction. During the month the Committee carried out a short inquiry into WG's White Paper 'Improving public transport', focusing on the bus, concessionary fares, taxi and private hire vehicle aspects. A stakeholders event and a local government evidence session were held on 1st and 23rd May respectively.

The Stakeholders Event. The Community Transport Association (CTA), the Confederation of Passenger Transport (CPT), PACTO, Sustrans, Traveline Cymru, Transport Focus and the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) were among the 28 stakeholders. Notes were put together by the Committee's research team. From the perspective of the North Pembrokeshire Transport Forum (NPTF) key points in the notes are included under the following categories:

Bus Services and Concessionary Fares

- Consensus generally in favour of Enhanced Quality Partnerships; these could be important in bringing in community transport providers.
- Priority for a transport system focused on passenger needs & customer experience (in particular of young people). An independent passenger representative body with a strong voice is needed.
- Proposals do not address the fundamental issue of drastic cuts at local authority level & lack of funding. A national investment strategy is called for.
- Great disappointment that Community Transport is missing from the proposals. Good community transport is vital for health & wellbeing & to address isolation.

Licensing of Taxis and Private Hire Vehicles (PHVs)

- Agreement for consistent national standards & a national register to share data.
- Re the lack of taxis for disabled people: accessibility is a key issue but not mentioned at all in the White Paper.

- Enforcement should remain local to take advantage of local knowledge.
- Rural issues must be reflected & understood in developing proposals.

Joint Transport Authorities (JTAs)

- Insufficient information re JTAs in relation to both taxis & PHVs & bus services.
- Proposals do not adequately reflect the voice of bus & rail passengers. The removal of regional transport consortia & the passenger advisory panel were concerns in that regard.
- It is also a great concern that community transport is missing from the proposals.
- The JTAs must recognise rural issues as distinct from urban issues & have someone who specifically represents the needs of rural areas.
- Things that can be done at national JTA level: Service planning & coordination, Real-time passenger information, Setting & policing national standards, Procurement of transport infrastructure, concessionary fares, data provision for operators & passengers, as well as Integrated ticketing & coordinating multi-modal travel on an integrated network.
- There is a lack of clarity about the board/body that will oversee the JTAs & also how Transport for Wales fits within the JTA model.
- Regional rail is missing. Unless bus & rail travel can be joined up there is no point to the proposals.

The Evidence Session. The Committee and a panel considered the White Paper proposals from a local government perspective. Panel members included Andrew Morgan (WLGA Spokesperson, Transport, Environment and Sustainability), Dave Holland (Head of Shared Regulatory Services—Bridgend, Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan), Dr Tim Peppin (Director of Regeneration and Sustainable Development, WLGA) and Roger Waters (Service Director—Highways and Streetcare, Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council).

This 'question and answer' session examined the proposals in considerable detail; regrettably too multifaceted and far-reaching to sum up in this document. However, the following remarks made by Dr Tim Peppin towards the close of the session are worth special consideration:

'Talking about buses, trains, taxis and active travel, we tend to work on them all in isolation. It's really important that we do see that whole integrated picture, because changes to the taxi regime will have impacts on people's ability to use taxis, which has a knock-on effect on whether they use the bus or not, or whether they decide to use active travel. And we do need to make sure that we look at the whole system.

That's why, I think, when we said about co-producing the next stage, the level of knowledge within local authorities about their local patch is vital to getting it right. And we want those discussions to take place now so that we don't have a stab in the dark and say, 'Well, let's try this and let's try that' and put it into the legislation—it's to actually work it through and say, 'Well, if we do this, what would happen in your local area?' And then, I think it's a more informed way forward'.

At the close of the session Committee chair Russell George AM thanked the witnesses for their time, adding *'There's a lot of what you said that I can see will come out in our report'.*

Visit <http://senedd.assembly.wales/ieListDocuments.aspx?Cid=446&Mid=5546&Ver=4> in order to find (in the meeting's transcript) a complete report of the Evidence Session.

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The North Pembrokeshire Transport Forum is an independent voluntary group that works for the provision of an effective integrated transport system in the North Pembrokeshire area, promotes the benefits of public transport and works towards the greater use of public transport systems.

The Forum's work is supported by:

Individual Members (£5 p.a.), Family Members (£8 p.a.) & Corporate Members (£12 p.a.)
 (Corporate members include town and community councils, transport operators, and groups, organisations and associations with a transport interest)

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