



North Pembrokeshire Transport Forum Fforwm Trafnidiaeth Gogledd Penfro

News Briefing – November 2014

National Assembly Enterprise & Business Committee - Tourism Inquiry

Relevance to North Pembrokeshire and South West Wales. This inquiry was of great interest to the North Pembrokeshire Transport Forum, as in our region (as well as in the wider South West Wales region) tourism and transport are inextricably linked and play a major role in the economy.

Background to the Inquiry. The committee issued a call for written evidence in April 2014. Nine oral evidence sessions were held with a variety of witnesses. Focus group sessions with local tourism organisations were held in Cardiff, St Davids and Blaenau Ffestiniog. Twenty-seven written statements were received, including submissions from Ramblers Cymru, Professor Stuart Cole, Walkers are Welcome Network UK and Railfuture Cymru.

Recommendations Relevant to North Pembrokeshire & South West Wales in the Written Statements:

Prof Stuart Cole, Emeritus Professor of Transport, Wales Transport Research Centre, University of South Wales called for:

- Comprehensive hard copy, up to date, clear and 'easy to find' information (including real time arrival times) at main terminals, interchange - and en route via mobile phone/iPad technology and travel information apps.
- Ease of interchange between car, cycle, walking and public transport, in addition to coordinated bus and rail services.
- Seamless ticketing with interchangeable and through tickets between public and private transport, between motorised and non-motorised (walking, cycling) transport and within public transport. As well as a simplified, easier to understand fare structure for the railways.
- Minimised journey times through investment in railway track and bus priority infrastructure.
- Newer vehicles and investment in stations and bus waiting facilities to improve passenger experience and enhance Wales as a tourist friendly destination and modern European nation.

Railfuture Cymru called for:

- Welsh stations need to be brought up to a higher standard to be customer including tourist friendly.
- A higher standard of rolling stock is required for most rail services in Wales. Trains used on the scenic lines of Wales afford the opportunity to view the magnificent Welsh scenery.
- Bus links need to be developed from railway stations to tourist locations.
- Visit Wales should work closely with transport providers. It is important that there is conductivity between rail services to and from Wales from England, including connections with cross country services.
- The railheads for the National Parks should have adequate facilities to encourage the transfer from rail to road transport together with adequate information facilities.

Recommendations Relevant to North Pembrokeshire & South West Wales in the Evidence Sessions:

- *Dan Clayton-Jones, Chair of the Tourism Advisory Board.* 'We also see that the transport trains within Wales could be developed much more in order to create an attraction for the visitor. Most of them are merely there to get you from A to B, when they could in fact be major leisure assets, as well as just transport'.
- *Wales Tourism Alliance.* Wales's transport infrastructure needs improving 'to the point where this is not seen as a barrier and there is smooth transportation of visitors from, or even away from, London on a significant scale'. (*n.b.*; This view was shared by a number of other respondents to the inquiry).
- *Visit Britain.* 'Transport and getting around is a huge issue...Getting a transport offer that is accessible and affordable to international visitors, and getting more transport passes that we

can sell is absolutely crucial to getting visitors around...We should talk about time taken, not distance travelled...Getting our public transport right and an integrated offer are absolutely crucial for us'.

The Committee's Final Report, November 2014 noted that within the Welsh Government, there is perhaps scope for improved coordination on tourism. As Ministers have pointed out in evidence, this is an industry that draws support from several departments and portfolios. This need for connected working was apparent with regard to infrastructure. Stakeholders emphasised the importance of good transport links and broadband and mobile connectivity for attracting visitors.

Buses - New TrawsCymru Aberystwyth - Haverfordwest Service

To link strategic areas, the Welsh Government funds a network of long distance TrawsCymru buses. A new TrawsCymru T5/412 Aberystwyth - Cardigan - Fishguard - Haverfordwest service, operated by Richards Bros, is to begin on Monday 5th January 2015. The Richards 410 town bus service will connect with the T5/412 in order to serve rail and ferry services at Fishguard Harbour. Over the last year patronage to and from Trecwn has been monitored, and due to the low numbers using the service, the number of T5/412 services to Trecwn will be reduced. The new service, reducing the time taken from Fishguard to Haverfordwest, will become more attractive to through passengers. A work time journey to and from Haverfordwest has been maintained, and, in addition to scheduled services, an additional free shuttle from Trecwn will be provided four times a day, timed to meet the T5/412 on the A40.

Ferries - Special Stena Christmas Day Trip Offer

From Stena Line's website (www.stenaline.co.uk/christmasdaytrip): "Forget about the high street hustle and bustle, set sail from Holyhead or Fishguard, any day from 2 November until 17 December, and cruise to Dublin Port or Rosslare where you'll have a little time to hop off the ferry, stretch your legs and enjoy a taste of Ireland. Come onboard from only £5 per person return and stock up on Christmas gifts for friends and family. Enjoy savings of up to 50% on designer fragrances, electronics, wine and confectionery in our better than ever onboard shop". Further information can be found on the website above.

Trains

Improvement to Fishguard - Carmarthen Morning Services. From 14th December when Arriva Trains Wales Winter/Spring services start, earlier Monday to Saturday morning services will provide improved public transport for commuters who need to be at work in Carmarthen by 9:00am. The change was made in response to customer feedback and in consultation with the Welsh Government and other key partners. The current early morning 06.53 and 08.04 services from Fishguard Harbour have been retimed earlier to 06:47 and 07:50 respectively. Copies of the new timetable are now available in the Fishguard Town Hall TIC.

Wales & Borders Franchise. Executive rail franchising functions have been fully devolved to the Welsh Government effective from 2017, enabling it to specify and award future Wales and Borders franchises. The North Pembrokeshire Transport Forum warmly welcomes this development. Strengthened rail services in the next Wales and Borders franchise must surely facilitate both growth and modal shift away from car use. And, with decisions on service frequencies and quality being made in Cardiff rather than Westminster, this seems rather more likely to occur.

Welsh Government Rail Interest Groups. Transport Minister Edwina Hart has asked officials to ensure that the Government is aware of the views of rail interest groups on rail matters in Wales and to give them an opportunity to register views. All relevant groups, including the North Pembrokeshire Transport Forum, have been invited to put forward their views in person at a series of regional meetings.

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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 is a member of Bus Users UK Cymru, the Environmental Network for Pembrokeshire and the Pembrokeshire Rail Travellers Association.

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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