



North Pembrokeshire Transport Forum Fforwm Trafnidiaeth Gogledd Penfro

March News Briefing, 2019

Annual General Meeting

The North Pembrokeshire Transport Forum (NPTF) held its 19th AGM at the Fishguard Bay Hotel on 13th March. The meeting focused on cycling and the Welsh Government's Active Travel action plan, with a presentation/discussion led by Nick Guy, Secretary of Wheelrights Swansea Cycle Group.

Key points that arose during the discussion:

- The disincentives to cycling; e.g. planning that doesn't deal with transport until the end of the process instead of at the beginning; not dealing with the need for cycle routes in rural areas; patchy cycle training in schools; more safe routes in communities projects, which can include cycle routes.
- The need to involve politicians in cycling developments.
- Prioritising cycle routes. Pembrokeshire County Council's review of maps next year is to include new routes.
- Need better quality signage for cycle routes.
- All aspects of travelling with bikes on trains.

Election of the Executive Committee: Andrew Campbell, Sally Francis, Stephen Hale, Cllr Mike James, Cllr Raymond Llewhelin, Tanya McVeigh, Mike Phillips, Mary Smith and Hatti Woakes were elected to serve on the Executive Committee for the next year.

Buses – Changes to Pembrokeshire Services

Pembrokeshire County Council (PCC) Consultation Report - 'Contracts and Proposed Service Changes'. Presented to the Pembrokeshire Council Cabinet on 11th March 2019.

Background. PCC provides subsidy to 22 local bus operators to provide services that would otherwise not be commercially viable and that provide residents with socially necessary journeys. Coastal buses, used by both residents and tourists, are also supported by PCC. Only 5 local bus services are operated commercially with no subsidy.

Effects of budget reductions over the past 8 years: (1) The removal of evening and Sunday services, (2) The number of routes operated reduced by 20%, (3) The frequency of over 40% routes reduced, along with (4) A reduction in passenger numbers of 25%.

Some developments have been put in place thanks to funding alternatives provided by Welsh Government (WG) and regional partners: (1) Support for the T5 bus service, (2) Development of a Bus Quality Partnership in Pembrokeshire, (3) Introduction of the Bwcabus project, and (4) Operating PCC in house public bus services.

The Consultation. As further budget reductions (£276k in total) are planned over 4 years, the views of residents, Local Members and bus users, were sought in a consultation that was carried out in the last two months of 2018. Key information received included:

- A majority of journeys made were work time journeys. Therefore, where possible it is considered that regular journeys are maintained.
- A period of operation during the summer would be the preferred option for the coastal buses. However to achieve the efficiencies required, the length of the summer period would have to be reduced and, additionally, a reduction from two days a week in the winter to one day a week.
- Good Friday services could be removed.
- Services that operate less than five days a week. The response was that the routes with fewer passengers should be removed. However, this would leave some rural areas with no bus services and with no other available alternative travel options.

Additional Information.

- The contracts for 9 local bus services are due to end on 31st March 2019. A mini competition exercise was undertaken for bus and taxi services.

- There was very little competition with a maximum of 2 tenders received for one route. Whilst the bids for 3 routes were less than the existing contract prices, others increased in cost.
- A number of alternative route specifications were tendered for each route and these have been analysed to identify where reductions can be made that will least impact the residents and provide the cost reductions required.
- It has been agreed by Council Cabinet that the following service changes are implemented in order to ensure the required efficiency savings can be delivered:

342 St David's – Haverfordwest. The route will be altered to start in Croesgoch and reduced from 2 days to 1 with Friday maintained. There is alternative transport in terms of the St David's DAR (Monday and Friday), the 404 (Strumble Shuttle) covers Berea and Llanrhian, Bwcabus covers Hayscastle Cross.

400 Coastal Bus: St David's – Martin's Haven. The summer timetable period will be reduced to 25th May until 8th September and the winter timetable period will be extended from 9th September until 24th May. During the winter period, the service will be reduced from 2 days to 1 day (Wednesday).

404 Coastal Bus: St David's – Fishguard. The summer timetable period will be reduced to 25th May until 8th September and the winter timetable period will be extended from 9th September until 24th May. During the winter period, the service will be reduced from 2 days to 1 day (Thursday).

405 Coastal Bus: Cardigan – Fishguard. The summer timetable period will be reduced to 25th May until 8th September and the winter timetable period will be extended from 9th September until 24th May. During the winter period, the service will be reduced from 2 days to 1 day (Monday).

411 & 413 Haverfordwest – Keeston - Roch – Solva – St David's – Croesgoch – Trefin – Mathry – Castlemorris – Llangloffan - Fishguard. This service will become a TrawsCymru Service T11 and become part of the TrawsCymru Bus Network. WG are keen to make the service a more direct town to town network using branded quality vehicles. It is therefore proposed that the route becomes an hourly service, 50% funded by WG. In order to meet the TrawsCymru criteria, the route will no longer divert into the villages of Llangloffan and Castlemorris. Passenger numbers have been analysed for these two villages, and it is evident that they would be better suited to Demand Responsive Transport. Bwcabus has therefore been expanded to provide a service to these villages.

Good Fridays. All subsidised bus routes currently operate on Good Friday. Due to the low number of passengers using bus services on Good Friday it is proposed that services will not operate on this day from 2020 onwards.

Conclusions. The proposed service changes 'will impact negatively on service users but are necessary in order to achieve the required efficiency savings for the forthcoming financial year. The routes affected are those which have the highest cost per passenger and are generally the least used services. The responses from the public consultation have been used to assist the decision making to ensure that the service changes have the least negative impact whilst still achieving the required efficiency savings. These changes ensure that all settlements currently served will continue to have at least one service per week and the services with peak time journeys will remain Monday to Friday to provide work-time journeys'.

PCC Cabinet. *Local Bus Services - Contract Awards and Proposed Service Changes.* DECISION: That the award of seven local bus service contracts and the proposed changes to the bus services, as detailed in the report, be approved. *Reason for Decision:* To achieve the required efficiency savings for the 2019-20 financial year. *Cabinet Meeting 11th March 2019.*

Hospital Transport

PCC has been awarded WG Local Transport Funding for the first stage of a study titled 'West Wales General Hospital Transport Appraisal – Baseline Assessment'. WSP Consultants were appointed by Pembrokeshire County Council under the South West and Mid Wales Consultancy Framework to undertake a baseline assessment study to assess General Hospital locations in West Wales. Subject to funding this piece of work would form the basis of a Strategic Case of a future WelTAG study to determine the optimum location of a West Wales General Hospital.

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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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