



North Pembroke Transport Forum Fforwm Trafnidiaeth Gogledd Penfro

News Briefing – August 2014

➤ EXTRA FISHGUARD TRAINS GIVEN THE GO AHEAD ◀

- Transport Minister, Edwina Hart, has agreed to extend the services until the end of the current franchise in 2018.
- Feedback about the extra services has been positive and research shows that the additional services have brought economic and social benefits.
- This decision has been gratefully welcomed by travellers, reflecting how much these new services are transforming lives and meeting a wide variety of needs.

Buses - Report of the Bus Policy Advisory Group

The Minister for Transport asked the Bus Policy Advisory Group (set up in January 2014) to review policy on bus services in Wales, and its report is now available. The report sets out the unanimous recommendations of the advisory group – these are the key proposals:

- Stability should be ensured by funding and governance arrangements having a life of at least three years.
- A consistent, pan-Wales approach to policy, standards and cross-boundary and cross-operator issues should be established.
- Network partnerships should be established, comprising local authorities, bus operators, bus users and key trip generators (e.g. retailers, health care providers) to review and develop services (within competition rules). They should be based on transport corridors and be focused on practical action to improve services, including infrastructure, marketing and network improvements.
- Kick-start funding should be available to provide short-term support for the pilot phases of new commercial services, new fares initiatives and other innovations. Bus operators should be able to access business development support for other commercial investments.
- Investment in infrastructure and road improvements should take full account of the importance of reliability of bus services.
- A Fair Fares initiative should develop an All Wales ticket and other fare-related projects.
- An information task group should be established to implement practical ways of improving information provision, including use of digital technology.
- A Welsh Bus Standard should be established, building on that developed in south east Wales. Operators should be incentivised and rewarded for compliance with the standard through grant payments. Those that do not reach a minimum should not receive public funding.
- Co-ordination of health and education-related transport with commercial and subsidised services should be encouraged, including two pilot projects to identify good practice.
- A working group should further develop a youth concessionary fares policy, including a review of the barriers faced by young people and assessing existing youth concessionary schemes.
- An orange-wallet type scheme and a Welsh module for the Driver Certificate of Competence should be introduced to improve services for disabled people.

The group recognised that there are considerable potential gains to be made by co-ordinating school transport, non-emergency patient transport and social services provision. Effective co-ordination can help the sustainability of commercial services, can utilise down-time efficiently and

improves people's ability to get to essential services. The reconfiguration of health services, cuts to social care provision and the reduction in home-school transport make action urgent.

Community Transport

The Bus Policy Advisory Group considered the potential for community transport as part of a wider network. It was recognised that there were many parts of Wales with limited or no bus services available, where community transport could play a vital role in improving accessibility for residents. Options could include regular services provided under Section 22 and demand responsive services where no other option is available. It considers it essential however that community transport is a coherent part of the wider bus network and should not compete with or undermine commercial bus services.

The Group considers that such networks could provide feeder services to bus hubs on principal routes, boosting overall passenger usage and providing accessibility to communities that would otherwise not have passenger transport services. It recommends that some pilot proposals be developed to demonstrate how community transport can be integrated into bus networks to increase accessibility be developed.

Download the Bus Policy Advisory Group report on <http://wales.gov.uk/topics/transport/public/review-bus-policy/?lang=en>.

Trains

Go Ahead for the Extra Fishguard Services. The Transport Minister also noted that "the results of surveys with passengers, the local community and businesses point to a need for these extra services. These services have made it easier for people to access hospital services, have improved tourism to Pembrokeshire and have helped reduce reliance on cars." All stations in Pembrokeshire served by the services have experienced increased usage, with passenger numbers to Fishguard, Goodwick and Fishguard Harbour stations doubling since the introduction of the additional trains in 2011. More than 60 per cent of passengers surveyed said they would not have been able to make their intended journey without the additional services. Businesses reported that the extra trains helped attract visitors to the area which saw increased usage of the coastal path and ferries to and from Ireland. More information: <http://wales.gov.uk/newsroom/transport/2014/9079864/?lang=en>.

Signage to Fishguard and Goodwick Train Stations. The Forum has been informed by the Trunk Road Agency that the proposal to amend the signing to Fishguard Harbour is currently with the Welsh Government to consider by the Traffic Signs Engineer. They have sent a reminder regarding this matter and will contact us as soon as they are in a position to inform us of any progress.

Welsh Government Rail Passenger Feedback

- In an ongoing initiative, the Welsh Government is seeking people's opinions on rail services and stations. The aim is to give them a more detailed understanding of passengers' experiences to help them raise specific concerns to the rail industry, as well as plan for future improvements.
- You can: (1) Download the English and Welsh PDF forms, (2) Obtain the documents in alternative formats, or (3) Fill in the feedback form online from <http://wales.gov.uk/topics/transport/rail/experience/?lang=en>.
- Both PDF forms may also be downloaded from the Forum website: www.nptf.co.uk.

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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