



North Pembrokeshire Transport Forum Fforwm Trafnidiaeth Gogledd Penfro

News Briefing – June 2015

Ministerial Progress Report on the Metro and the All-Wales Rail Franchise

On 30th June, Minister for Economy, Science and Transport Edwina Hart AM confirmed that significant progress has been made on key issues relating to the new rail franchise for Wales and the Metro integrated transport network. Forming part of the All-Wales rail franchise, the rail portion of the Metro will be run and managed by the not-for-dividend company that is being set up by the WG to operate the rail franchise on its behalf after 2018. The company will be operated on a model similar to Transport for London.

The commercial process began this week when the WG began market testing the proposals with an industry engagement event in Cardiff. This allowed potential bidders, rolling stock operators, maintenance operators, financiers and interested parties to explore and discuss the new franchise and Metro directly with the WG.

The Minister said: 'We are engaging with the industry to help us develop the most efficient delivery structure. We believe that this approach will yield innovative solutions which may be better value and outcomes. At this stage there are many options for modes of transport including: light rail, heavy rail, bus rapid transit and trams. We are keeping an open mind on the detail of what improvements may look like in reality. That said we will not compromise on quality, capacity, reliability and efficiency, which must increase to allow more frequent services to be run.

By combining the procurement of the Metro with the All-Wales Franchise we will be able to ensure a step change in quality for rail-users right across Wales. We are expecting real benefits to passengers, including faster journey times, higher quality services, improved reliability and less overcrowding'.

To see the full report, visit <http://gov.wales/newsroom/transport/2015/10323913/?lang=en>.

Community Transport Association Roadshow

The CTA Annual Roadshow is taking place across the UK this year, giving members and non-members the opportunity to meet with CTA staff, trustees and corporate supporters. The Welsh event was held at Llys Glas in Swansea on 30th June where a well attended gathering (1) looked at the big issues in CT, (2) considered the latest updates on transport policy, planning and delivery, (3) received updates on CTA services, and (4) networked with each other and with other organisations with whom CTA works closely.

The National Assembly Enterprise & Business Committee - City Region Scrutiny

On 3rd June Transport Minister Edwina Hart AM, James Price (Welsh Government Director General, Economy, Science and Transport) and others answered questions from the Committee on City Regions.

Points made by the Minister of particular relevance to the Swansea Bay City Region, West Wales and/or North Pembrokeshire:

- They (the Swansea Bay City Region Board) have done the branding for Swansea and for the wider region to create a strong recognisable identity for the region.
- There are issues about links into Ireland and how we can improve in west Wales our links into Ireland.
- They (the Swansea Bay City Region Board) have definitely looked at major tourism projects and tourism links.
- We (the WG) are giving further support, with Professor Stuart Cole, to help the city region look at the transport issues within the region.
- Transport is a big issue for us, and even though we (the WG) haven't got bus regulation, there is an increasing view that we can work more collectively in terms of the transport agenda, with the private operators working with us to help with some of the transport infrastructures across both city regions.
- There is a very good line that runs up from west Wales into Swansea. We need to look at getting bigger and better hubs, where people can park cars so we can get commuters on those routes.
- We (the WG) have had a big discussion with user groups on what they require from the franchise, which has been absolutely excellent in terms of what they want.

- We (the WG) think that there's a good future for bus transport in Wales.
- Question to James Price: You've had discussions, haven't you, about how Transport for London and everything have operated?
- Reply from James Price: One of the big challenges that we've got to address is proper integrated ticketing. That will be the test as to whether that can be done in full without having powers. Without proper integrated ticketing -- The Minister: 'We can't do it'. James Price: - 'to my mind, it doesn't really work'.
- 'If you (the Committee) wish in the future, probably in the autumn, to look at the next stage for the city regions, I'm sure we'd all be more than happy to come back for scrutiny in terms of where we're going with the city region structure. It might also be helpful, that Professor Stuart Cole might attend one time with me to look at some of the transport challenges within the city region in Swansea and the issues around innovation on transport'.

Visit <http://www.senedd.assembly.wales/documents/s40895/3%20June%202015.html?CT=2> to consult the meeting transcript.

The Regional Transport Forum (RTF) for South West Wales

An RTF meeting was held in Port Talbot on 12th June. From the North Pembrokeshire Transport Forum's perspective, key points made during the meeting included:

1. Update on Bus Funding & Concessionary Fares

- A slight increase in the WG grant award for the current financial year - the total budget rising from £5,097,056 to £5,204,903.
- A rise in live service kilometres from 20,092,321 to a forecast 21,182,937 - taking services back to the level prior to the funding reductions. The majority of the increase being due to commercial service growth in the more densely populated areas.
- Indication in community transport sector forecasts that eligible service kilometres will stabilise at 2,517,660 during 2015/16.
- Additional WG funding to support a Young Persons Concessionary Fares Scheme - a 33% discount for 16 and 17 year olds from September 2015.
- On line concessionary pass applications to be piloted - using young peoples' applications for passes.

2. Active Travel Act

- The WG deadline for local authority first submissions of Existing Route Maps (ERMs) has been extended from 24th September 2015 to 22nd January 2016.
- Pembrokeshire County Council: Mapping (received from Exegesis) is complete but difficult to use. Consultation has commenced with all schools receiving blank maps to indicate routes currently in use. No audits complete to date. Exploring the possibility of holding a public engagement exercise at the County Show.

3. The Joint Local Transport Plan (LTP) for the Swansea Bay City Region

The plan, endorsed by the Swansea Bay City Region Board (CRB), was submitted to WG on 31st January 2015. On 21st May the Transport Minister confirmed approval of the joint plan.

An Appendix to the Joint LTP provides details about the improvements required to ensure all economic opportunities in South West Wales are maximized and the City Region is connected and open for business.

Improvements of particular relevance to the City Region, West Wales and/or North Pembrokeshire:

Rail Services

- Electrification of the Great Western mainline to Swansea. Increase service levels east and west of Swansea.
- Improve integration at railway stations through improved bus, cycle, walking, electric vehicle charging and parking facilities.
- Improve quality of carriages and allow for cycle carriage on trains.
- Continue to support additional rail services to Fishguard/Goodwick. Fishguard and Goodwick to be part of franchise requirements.

- Examine the potential for increased rail traffic to/from ports. Support the development of the TEN-T Rail network.

Sea Services

- Maximise multi modal journeys which utilise port capacity.
- Continue to encourage appropriate development close to ports.
- Encourage tourism related traffic through ports to increase the viability of towns and district centres.

Revenue

- Increase existing levels of funding for road maintenance, support for rail, bus and community transport services. Set up 3-5 year guaranteed levels of support to bus and community transport. Protect and grow TrawsCymru strategic services.
- Fund pilot studies for innovative 'travel to work' transport. Implement behavioural change programmes to encourage more sustainable travel.
- Develop and introduce an all Wales payment method for use on multi modal or multi operator journeys.

4. RTF Response to Network Rail's Wales Route Study Consultation

Introduction: The RTF's Regional Rail Strategy sets a realistic and yet aspirational approach to ensuring that rail plays a formative role in the future of the region, supporting and facilitating economic growth and regeneration.

Key points in the response from the North Pembrokeshire Transport Forum's perspective:

- The CRB is committed to delivering a strong and viable economy in South West Wales. It is important that rail plays a full part in supporting its vision.
- The City Region is situated on the Trans European Rail Network which links Europe to the Republic of Ireland.
- The RTF is pleased to note the Route Study's proposals for increased services to and from the region, east and west of Swansea.
- The RTF thinks that growth could be higher than predicted and urges a review of growth figures in the light of the expected growth in the region to make sure that rail capacity supports and does not constrain the success of the region over the next 25 years.
- As passenger numbers have grown significantly since 2008 and the potential for freight demand to increase remains, RTF suggests that potential track improvements continue to be developed to increase capacity and speed for passengers and freight.
- RTF also recommends improvements to stations in the region in the short and medium term as well as (in the short term) ensuring the re-signalling improvement at Swansea (to allow movement into the stations from east and west at the same time) is completed by electrification, (in the medium term) examining infrastructure requirements to support increased rail freight in South West Wales, and (in the long term) electrification west of Swansea and working to secure direct rail access to Heathrow from the Great Western Main Line.

Cruise Ship Visits to Fishguard Harbour

Carl Milne, Stena Line's Port Operations Manager, has reported that it has been a busy season for the Port of Fishguard with 5 cruise visits in June alone. The mainly American visitors have been provided with local shore side entertainment, passengers being greeted as they disembark, and provided with shuttle services allowing them to explore around the local area.

.....
 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)

For further information, contact the Secretary, 2 Hill Terrace, Fishguard SA65 9LU
 Tel: (01348) 874217. E-mail: info@nptf.co.uk. Website: www.nptf.co.uk.