



North Pembrokehire Transport Forum Fforwm Trafnidiaeth Gogledd Penfro

News Briefing – March 2013

South West Wales Integrated Transport Consortium (SWWITCH) Joint Committee Meeting, Haverfordwest, 22nd March 2013

1. Update on Bus Funding Changes

Due to public sector financial constraints, substantial changes to bus and community transport funding will come into effect from April 2013, with a reduction in funding for bus service support of approximately 26%. Representatives from Welsh Government (WG), the transport consortia, Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA), Bus Users UK (BUUK), Community Transport Association (CTA) and bus operators have met regularly to address issues related to:

- How the former Bus Service Operator's Grant (BSOG) total for Wales will be disaggregated across consortia.
- The basis and mechanisms for the new mileage based element of bus funding.
- Funding for consortia to address new responsibilities (formerly undertaken by Department for Transport).

The overall funding pot for the new Welsh Regional Transport Services Grant (RTSG) for 2013/14 will be £25m (compared to approx £33m in 2011/12). This is split across the 4 Welsh consortia, with SWWITCH due to receive just over £5m. The RTSG will be split into two funding streams:

- Just under £2m to support tendered services.
- Just over £3m to support mileage on commercial services and community transport/eligible local Council run services.

Meetings have been held with bus and community transport operators to share information on the key issues, mechanisms and processes involved in the new arrangements, and dialogue will be maintained to try and ensure smooth transition as far as possible.

Collection of data on bus and community transport mileage and making mileage based payments to operators is a significant new responsibility; especially with a fixed annual amount of available funding. If new mileage is introduced in the region (such as new commercial routes or additional service frequencies within a route), the overall rate per mile for all operators (existing and new) will have to decrease. This will make business planning for operators difficult and could lead to greater volatility in the bus network.

2013/14 is to be a transition year, as much remains to be resolved. Of particular concern will be how the commercial bus operators react to the reduced level of public sector support, what level of commercial deregistrations may arise and thus result in a strain on the public sector to try and replace bus services to cut off communities.

2. Community Transport

The Welsh Government has stipulated that 10% of the overall funding pot should be used to support Community Transport Services, and the consortia are working with the Government and the Community Transport Association to define services which fall into that category. In the current financial year, this funding was expected to total approximately £1.3m. Welsh Government funding available for community transport services in 2013-14 will be £2.5m.

3. Walking and Cycling - Active Transport (Wales) Bill

The purpose of the Bill is to require local authorities to continuously improve facilities and routes for pedestrians and cyclists and to prepare maps identifying current and potential future routes for their use. The Bill will also require new road schemes (including road improvement schemes) to consider the needs of pedestrians and cyclists at the design stage. The objective is to reinforce the idea of active travel as a viable mode of transport and a suitable alternative to motorised transport for shorter journeys; as well as to create an environment where it is safer and more practical to walk and cycle than it is at present.

SWWITCH has been engaged with the early stage consultation on this process and remains an eager participant in the current ongoing work to ensure the Bill is effective in the longer term. A Walking and Cycling sub group has continued to meet regularly and is already working on regional mapping, priorities and monitoring.

National Assembly for Wales Enterprise & Business Committee Active Transport (Wales) Bill Evidence Sessions

The Enterprise and Business Committee took evidence from Carl Sargeant AM, the then Minister with responsibility for Transport, on 6th March. Representatives from the Welsh Local Government Association and the Regional Transport Consortia gave evidence on 20th March. Key issues/topics that were raised and discussed during these meetings included:

- Adequate resourcing for all aspects of mapping; plus ‘changing hearts and minds’ (promotional, educational) and infrastructural interventions.
- Detail in the Bill and in the planning and design guidance for the routes.
- A more flexible than inflexible approach to the development of guidance; consultation with relevant stakeholders and scrutiny by Assembly Members.
- Deliverable timescales: such as a five-year cycle tied in with regional transport plans to ensure synchronisation between the two sets of plans. Regional transport consortia look at all transport modes.
- Active travel planning needs to be at as local a level as possible, and the role of the local authority in the decision making with the community is critical to that.
- Map making: the need for specialist staff and publication in formats that meet the needs of all types of users.
- The different types of routes: recreational and ‘active travel’ (utility, commuter); urban and rural; shared use; plus seasonal flows (students, tourists); and their integration with other transport modes.
- Location of routes: existing network versus new routes; compulsory purchase; cross-boundary issues with paths not quite connecting and different sorts of information provision.
- ‘Related facilities’: shelter and storage, toilets and washing facilities, crossings for use by active travellers, provision of lighting for safety, etc.
- Targets, measurement/monitoring of outcomes re ‘securing continuous improvement’.
- Legislation, strategy, strategic direction and leadership will all play a part in the process.

North Pembrokeshire Transport Forum AGM

The 13th Annual General Meeting of the North Pembrokeshire Transport Forum was held on Wednesday, 20th March at Llwyngwair Manor in Newport, at 7.00pm.

The Annual Report made particular reference to rail and community transport service developments during the period under review. The provision of additional rail services to Fishguard and the commencement on work to reopen Fishguard and Goodwick Station were warmly welcomed; while the uncertainty with regard to continued funding of the Community Transport Fares Initiative was deeply worrying.

The highlight of the meeting was a presentation by Sue Mackie, General Manager of POINT, Fishguard and Goodwick’s young persons trust, about the work they will be doing as Station Adopters at Fishguard and Goodwick Station. The Forum warmly welcomes this opportunity to involve our young people, with the support of the train company, in such a positive improvement to our transport network.

Sally Francis, Steve Hale, Cllr Peter Harwood, Kate Hawkins, Sophie Hurst, Cllr Michael James, Emma Lewis, and Hatti Woakes were elected to serve on the Forum’s Executive Committee for the forthcoming year.

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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