



# North Pembrokeshire Transport Forum Fforwm Trafnidiaeth Gogledd Penfro

## Additional May News Briefing, 2022

### Senedd Climate Change, Environment and Infrastructure Committee Bus and Rail Transport Inquiry - Engagement Findings

#### Introduction

A series of meetings with passengers was carried out between 21<sup>st</sup> March and 21<sup>st</sup> April 2021. Participants included both bus and rail passengers, people with disabilities, people living and working in rural, urban and tourist areas; and business owners. The discussions looked at:

1. The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on public transport, 2. The real and perceived barriers to using Welsh bus and rail services, and 3. How to address the barriers to using Welsh bus and rail services and increase public transport use.

#### Selected Engagement Comments

##### 1. Regarding the Covid-19 Pandemic.

- 'You've got two years of "don't use public transport" to overturn...you have to build confidence...demonstrate that it's reliable and consistent...put the passenger first, not the operational needs'.
- Many identified the elderly, vulnerable, and people with health concerns as the most unlikely to return to public transport.
- A real barrier for people during the pandemic was the changes to the timetables and routes on the buses.

##### 2. Regarding barriers to using Welsh bus and rail services.

###### *Public transport connectivity.*

- 'It has been embarrassing for all of us who've been involved in public transport to hear about the problems we're having with train and ferry connections in Fishguard...If we had a two-hourly train service that would mitigate it to a certain extent'.
- 'I've got two nurses in the family and they can't even consider using public transport to get to work...you can't get there by public transport to start your shift on time and there's also no service to get you home'.

###### *Connections, journey times, availability and reliability of services.*

- 'One of problems is tight connections between different systems. Five minutes is not good enough. If anything goes wrong you've missed your connection'.
- 'The interchange with the ferry in Pembrokeshire is disgraceful. Any people on a late train are stranded for hours, days even'.
- 'If I was to jump in my car to get to Abergavenny from Pembrokeshire it would take me an hour and a half. It takes 3 1/2 hours by train'.
- 'When I have to attend meetings at Cardiff occasionally, I drive from Pembrokeshire because public transport takes too long'.
- 'A lot of transport services seem to be geared to nine to five, whereas it's not really nine to five that needs to be looked at. The whole day needs to be looked at, say from 7:00 AM through till 10:00 PM'.
- 'Mitigating cancellations to a rail replacement bus doesn't cut it at all. If people are travelling by train, they want the train!'

- 'When things go wrong we need to get better at communicating with passengers...the expectation is on you to have a mobile phone...to find out what the latest position is. It's your problem if you can't'.

#### *Accessibility*

- 'If you have mobility issues and you want to use the train you need to know if the train station is accessible, if there is step-free access, and if your pre-booked support to get onto the train from the platform will actually be available, or will it be cancelled at the last minute with no notice? You also need to know if the staff at the train station know how to support you if you have learning disabilities and don't understand the announcements'.
- 'There are always issues around physical accessibility for people who've got mobility support needs. If you're a wheelchair or walking frame user you want to know that the bus is going to have space for you, that the bus driver is trained in using the ramp, that the bus driver is confident about getting you on the bus, and that you can get to your seat before they drive off'.
- 'If we were able to work together to create a public transport system that worked for disabled people, older people, or people with learning disabilities, it would then automatically work for everybody else'.

### **3. Addressing barriers to using bus and rail services and increase use of public transport.**

*Ideas that participants felt would support improvements to Welsh bus and rail services.*

1. Integrated ticketing to provide passengers with transferability across different modes, operators, and geographies.
2. Flexible ticketing to enable passengers to block buy trips to take when they want.
3. Real-time integrated travel information across all available platforms, from online to station announcements, from one information provider.
4. Sensible connection times between modes of transport to give enough time for all passengers to successfully board their connection.
5. Public transport to run to a headway (time between vehicles) as opposed to being scheduled for any specific time of the day.
6. Provision to transport bicycles on public transport.
7. The reintroduction of paper timetables.
8. Integration of transport policy with other policies affecting land use planning or infrastructure-related investments, such as hospitals and housing developments.
9. Improve Newport to Pembrokeshire rail services by:
  - a) addressing the 'dogleg' in Swansea;
  - b) completing the electrification of the South Wales mainline;
  - c) developing Carmarthen as a railhead to provide more frequent trains across West Wales; and
  - d) a two-hourly service to Fishguard.

### **4. In Closing**

For the Committee's report, with full information about these significant meetings, Visit [https://business.senedd.walewiths/documents/s125482/paper-Bus and rail engagement findings.pdf](https://business.senedd.walewiths/documents/s125482/paper-Bus%20and%20rail%20engagement%20findings.pdf)

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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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