



North Pembrokehire Transport Forum Fforwm Trafnidiaeth Gogledd Penfro

January News Briefing, 2023

Welsh Government Response to Bus & Rail Recommendations

1. Introduction

The Welsh Government response to the 26 recommendations in the Climate Change, Environment & Infrastructure Committee's report was received on 16th December. The full response is included in the papers for the Committee's next meeting on 12th January.

2. Responses of Particular Relevance to South-West Wales

Recommendation 9

- The Welsh Government should bring forward proposals as soon as possible to address transport poverty in Wales arising from the cost-of-living crisis, including subsidised fare pricing and other financial support.

Response: Accept in principle

- Welsh Government already fund the MyTravelPass scheme which offers young bus users a third off their tickets. Our Programme for Government commitment also sets out how we will build on the success of that scheme. Detailed work is underway to consider a range of options to deliver a system of more equitable bus fares across Wales.
- We are currently examining a range of options to introduce a new 'Fairer Fares' policy to make bus travel more affordable and bus use more attractive to all in the community. This includes and builds on our Programme for Government Commitment to enhance discounted travel opportunities for younger people. There is a lot of interest in low fares initiatives from public bodies across the UK.
- Whilst we haven't ruled out such a policy we must be realistic about the budgetary restrictions within which we must operate. In terms of purchasing power the Welsh Government budget is worth significantly less today than it was twelve months ago.
- We recognise the impact the cost of living crisis is having and alongside the budgetary restrictions will inform decisions on regulated rail fares and other rail fare products Transport for Wales are developing. We are also working with Transport for Wales on the development of Pay as You Go rail fares, which will be a "tap in – out" product that is planned to be initially deployed in the South Wales Metro area. These will offer a range of value for money single leg fares with a daily, weekly and monthly price cap similar to that used for public transport in London.

Recommendation 20

- The Welsh Government should provide the Committee with an update on specific interventions aimed at encouraging modal shift in the large population living in rural areas in Wales.

Response: Accept

- Welsh Government welcomes the opportunity to set out its rural transport pathway to support people living in rural parts of Wales to access public transport and use their own cars less. This pathway includes measures such as increasing Transport for Wales successful Fflecsi scheme pilots, supporting community owned and run car clubs, better integration with community transport, and improving integration between rural and urban transport networks within a region. We have undertaken a series of round tables with local authority partners and wider stakeholders to scrutinise our plans, which was welcomed by stakeholders. We will look to publish our finalised rural pathway in spring 2022.

Recommendation 21

- The Welsh Government should set out its position on the suggestions made by members of the public through our engagement work, which are included in this Report (Removing barriers and increasing public transport use: 10 principles from our engagement work – p.47 of report)

Response: Accept

- Welsh Government would welcome the opportunity to set out its position on the suggestions made by members of the public through the committee's engagement work.

Responses of relevance to South West Wales.

- **Integrated ticketing.** Welsh Government is already progressing work via TfW on developing its approach to integrated ticketing across modes and with different operators in Wales.
- **Flexible ticketing.** Transport for Wales already offer "multiflex tickets" which are a discounted block of 12 single trips. We are also working with Transport for Wales on Pay as You Go ticketing initially in the South Wales Metro area.
- **Real-time integrated travel information.** Welsh Government is already progressing work via TfW on developing real time information for busses, and has systems already in place for displaying real time information to customers at rail stations bilingually.

- **Sensible connection times between modes of transport. Welsh Government is already progressing work via TfW on integrated journey planning between busses and rail.** This is supported by Welsh Government's investment in transport interchanges across Wales, bringing rail, bus and active travel together into one place to support people to change between modes.
- **Public transport to run to a headway - as opposed to being scheduled for any specific time of day.** Bus timetabling is currently a matter for individual operators. Our bus reform bill will give us the power to set the timetable.
- **Increase capacity to transport bicycles on public transport.** Welsh Government will be considering the specifications of vehicles as part of the planning for the introduction of bus franchising. The £800m investment in brand new trains includes that the new trains will have improved and increased capacity for cycle carriage. TfW are also looking at options to develop "Active Travel" carriages for use on the Heart of Wales Line.
- **Reintroduce paper timetables.** The production of timetables is a matter for individual bus operators. All bus timetables are available online, through the Traveline Cymru app, or the Traveline Cymru contact centre. Paper rail timetables are available at staffed stations across Wales.

Recommendation 24

- Transport for Wales should publish the latest iteration of its five-year delivery plan for all three Welsh Metro schemes.

Response: Accept

- Welsh Government would welcome the opportunity to provide an update on the Metro projects being delivered across Wales and the programmes which will be delivered as a result. These programmes will form a key part of the regional transport plans for those regions which include Metro projects. We will produce a Written Statement in the new year.

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