



North Pembrokeshire Transport Forum Fforwm Trafnidiaeth Gogledd Penfro

News Briefing – May 2015

Rail Users Seminar on the Wales & Borders Franchise Specification, Cardiff City Hall, 11th May

This meeting of rail interest groups was hosted by the Mid Wales Railways Implementation Group. The keynote speech by James Price, Welsh Government (WG) Director General for Economy, Science and Transport, was followed by presentations from Paul Salveson and David Edwards ('Transforming a Rural Railway - the Heart of Wales Line') and Cllr Trevor Roberts ('The Cambrian Lines'). After lunch delegates went into workshops to discuss stations, services, infrastructure and trains.

From the Forum's perspective, key points made in the presentations included:

1. James Price:

- The Minister is committed to publishing an update on the future franchise specification this Assembly term and wants those present's views first.
- WG has made significant progress in discussions with the Department for Transport (DfT) to determine our future role in rail franchising.
- In December the Minister announced a not for dividend, wholly owned subsidiary company of the WG; initially to: (1) provide advice and technical expertise to drive forward the Metro projects; (2) specify and procure the next Welsh rail franchise; and (3) implement the Valleys Lines modernisation project. It will provide the technical, commercial and engineering expertise necessary to augment the Department in delivering these projects and ultimately might become a type of Transport for London body.
- WG has had discussions with the DfT to ensure that long distance rail services operated by other franchises meet the needs of people travelling to and from Wales. Where the franchise provides cross border links, WG is of the strong view that these should be strengthened and improved, not diminished.
- A number of investments have delivered or will deliver significant improvements – including electrification and modernisation schemes, new stations, station improvements, signal and track improvements to enhance capacity, and new rolling stock.
- A number of discussions have been held with companies about the purchase of new stock. They would much prefer rolling stock to be owned by the WG rather than to be leased. Rolling stock will be compliant with the Persons of Restricted Mobility (PRM) requirements by 2020 and able to meet expected future passenger demand.

2. Paul Salveson and David Edwards:

- Paul spoke about the benefits from embedding the railway in the community, making it a catalyst for sustainable development in Mid-Wales, bringing wider social, economic and environmental benefits. He set out some pointers for a Vision for the Heart of Wales Line.
- David spoke about the Heart of Wales Line Forum's experience working with and reporting to the Minister, and was very grateful for her current 'start-up' grant to develop and launch the Heart of Wales Line Enterprise Network, which is being assisted by Transport Department and Wales Cooperative Centre officials. After many years of campaigning extra services have been introduced in the Arriva Trains Wales May timetable.

3. Cllr Trevor Roberts:

- Surveys were carried out to find out what needed to change to improve the Shrewsbury-Aberystwyth and Cambrian Coast Lines. The surveys attracted 6,500 responses, and mainly hourly services to both lines have been provided in Arriva's May timetable.

For further information visit: <http://gov.wales/transport/topics>.

Transport Focus Conference - Cardiff City Hall, 13th May

As a multi-modal user group, the North Pembrokeshire Transport Forum was pleased that this well-attended conference included presentations from those responsible for train, bus and community transport services in Wales, as well as those from Transport Focus representatives. The closing stakeholder reception included a presentation from Superintendent Andy Morgan (British Transport Police).

From the Forum's perspective, key points made in the presentations included:

1. Anthony Smith, Transport Focus Chief Executive. Information from the Autumn 2014 National Rail Passenger Survey:

- Biggest impact on overall satisfaction with Arriva Trains rail services was: Cleanliness inside the train (36%), followed by Punctuality/reliability (26%), Ease of getting on/off the train (12%), Journey length (6%), Provision of information at stations (4%) - plus Others (16%).
- Biggest impact on overall dissatisfaction was: How train company deals with delays (65%), followed by How request to station staff handled (7%), Sufficient room for all to sit/stand (6%), Comfort of seating area (5%), Personal security on board train (5%) - plus Others (13%).

2. Ian Bullock (IB), Arriva Trains Wales (ATW) Managing Director. From his report on the current 2003 - 2015 ATW franchise:

- Arriva investment +£32m (over and above the £400k requirement).
- 956 services a day (in contrast to 800 in 2003).
- Around 31m passenger journeys in 2014 (compared to 18m in 2003); Growth rate not anticipated, nor catered for, in the contract.
- Delivering local rail cards, concessionary fares schemes and seasonal offers such as Club 55.
- 'Assisted Travel' service, all ticket offices now fully accessible, station adoption scheme, guidance for older and disabled customers.

3. Peter Heath (PH), Cardiff Bus Operations and Commercial Director:

- Comparison between buses and rail: (1) Buses carry 107m passengers per annum compared to 31m rail passengers; (2) Rail as a mode receives a far higher level of subsidy than buses; (3) Rail funding is stable over franchise life and buses are funded year on year.
- There needs to be more parity between modes and more stability for the bus market, with funding based on 5 year plans.
- There is a need for partnership working; Operators, Local authorities and WG need to work together on bus services.
- With regard to delivering the National Transport Plan (NTP), key elements include: (1) Reliability (bus industry figure is 95%); (2) Fares policy (must be simple and value for money); (3) Information (a step change is needed, a move towards new technology should be embraced); (4) Quality product (moving towards a new fleet of accessible vehicles with WiFi and audio/visual announcements).

4. Siân Summers-Rees, Community Transport Association (CTA) Director for Wales:

- What is community transport (CT)?: (1) Non-commercial-not for profit, accessible, cost-effective, flexible transport run by the community for the community; (2) Meets needs of those who do not have access to other forms of transport.
- CT benefits: (1) Provides a lifeline in urban and rural areas; (2) Operates when public transport not accessible or suited for everyone, e.g.; due to age related health and disability/mobility issues, location, unsuitable or unavailable public transport, shift work patterns.
- Challenges: (1) Uncertainty about future funding streams; (2) Sourcing grant funding; (3) Volunteer recruitment; (4) Vehicle replacement.
- With regard to delivering the NTP, the CTA is disappointed about the lack of reference to CT in the NTP, as the sector contributes to the key aims of the Plan and is focused on integration, collaboration and innovation.

5. Diane McCrea, Transport Focus Board Member for Wales:

- With regard to the information that Transport Focus gathers, they have 15 years' worth of survey data and this is available on their website, www.transportfocus.org.uk.
- Re franchising: (1) Passengers should know when a franchise is coming up for renewal and have an opportunity to feed in their views; (2) When the franchise is let there should be a clear statement about what has been purchased on the behalf of passengers; (3) It is important that the specifier and operator of the service are accountable to users, with targets based on what passengers think.

Some of the key points raised in the subsequent Question and Answer session:

Q: Why don't bus and rail companies work together better on timetable to insure multi modal journeys don't involve long delays?

A: (IB/PH) This is very obviously needed and actually very difficult to achieve. Rail services have very

rigid patterns and timings because of all the connections that take place across the whole of the route, so seemingly small changes to address one such issue can have a huge impact across the network. In terms of buses there is more flexibility, but also where most journeys are performing many functions, it is often difficult to address travel to and from stations as it may involve delays on board for other passengers.

Q: We have been talking about integrated transport for years, it is nebulous concept and we have yet to succeed to integrate haven't we?

A: (IB) It is very difficult with many parts of the transport system owned or managed by different organisations with different drivers. We would really need a PTA type approach to help drive forward integration.

Q: Concerns about accessibility of public transport for those with mobility impairments.

A: (TF) They do use mystery shoppers to test out operators on this and they recommend the "Passenger Assist" service which they believe generally works well. (PH) All new vehicles have audio and visual displays but they are quite expensive to maintain. After 2015 all buses will be accessible, as it will be illegal to operate a bus which is not accessible to those with disabilities. (IB) The Orange wallet scheme has been adopted by ATW which has been some help. In terms of rolling stock, by 2020 trains should be accessible, at present only the class 175s are, and that is a small proportion of the current fleet.

To download the presentation papers visit www.transportfocus.org.uk/research/all.

Corinthian Cruise Ship Visit to Fishguard Harbour, 18th May

The County Echo reported that passengers were met by the Mayor Richard Grosvenor and Jemima Nicholas (aka Jacqui Scarr) before being entertained by Bois y Wlad. On their return from a visit to St Davids passengers enjoyed a display by the Sea Cadets before the Côr Abergwaun entertained them on board ship at the close of their visit. The ship will be returning to Fishguard Harbour several times in June.

Pembrokeshire County Council Transport Press Reports, 18th May

Welsh Transport Minister Edwina Hart AM has announced WG grant awards to the Council that include the following improvements to North Pembrokeshire:

- Improvements to bus stop and car parking facilities at Fishguard and Goodwick rail station.
- The first phase of a project to widen Glasfryn Road in St David's.
- Road safety schemes including 20mph zones at various schools.
- A 300-metre extension to the shared-use path across Goodwick Moor, originally built in 2010.

Swansea Bay City Region Innovation Summit - Liberty Stadium, 21st May

In its report on the summit launch, *The Western Mail* noted that keynote speaker Board Chair Sir Terry Matthews said 'This is a very innovative city and we are now into what many people call the second generation of machines, the second industrial revolution...Its about driving the needle, working a little bit faster and getting results a little bit quicker for better jobs, better opportunities, better industries. This is really a city and a region where things are happening...For those that have never been down to Carmarthenshire and Pembrokeshire, believe me the needle is moving there too'. Transport Minister Edwina Hart AM made the point that the city region is not just about Swansea, but the whole region. She added 'I'm delighted we've had such successful conversations with the other local authorities involved...The city does play a major role but this will benefit not just Swansea, but the rest of the region'.

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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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