



# North Pembrokeshire Transport Forum Fforwm Trafnidiaeth Gogledd Penfro

## News Briefing – April 2016

### The Fourth National Assembly for Wales & Transport

Throughout the Assembly period Assembly Members and the Welsh Government carried out an impressive amount of solid, in-depth work on transport. The Assembly is now in dissolution. Throughout dissolution there are no Assembly Members and so there will be no Assembly business during this time. The Fifth Assembly will begin after election day on Thursday 5 May 2016.

#### 1. Transport Inquiries completed by the Enterprise & Business Committee, 2011-2016

From our perspective the examples selected are of particular significance to North Pembrokeshire and South West Wales.

##### 1.1 International Connectivity through Welsh Ports and Airports. WG response September 2012

- WG already strengthening the relationship between the Welsh Government, ports, local authorities and tourism business to ensure a co-ordinated approach to improving the tourist experience and funding berthing facilities that will attract cruise liners.
- WG promoting the cruise sector in Wales, taking steps to strengthen and support Cruise Wales.

##### 1.2 Integrated Public Transport. WG response June 2013

- Public transport integration is a priority. Future funding will depend on operators meeting minimum quality standards that passengers most wish to see, which includes integration with other modes.
- WG will continue to work with bus and rail operators to make timetable integration and service connection improvements.
- The importance of modal integration will be explored in the development of the new Wales and Borders franchise.
- A specific project has been set up to ensure the link between transport provision and health reform.
- Options to develop a fully integrated e-ticketing system in Wales have been considered. Further consideration of the options will be required before approval, and the delivery of such a system is dependant on the availability of finance.

##### 1.3 Future of the Wales and Borders Rail Franchise. WG response January 2014

- Rail franchising functions, subject to an equitable settlement, should be transferred to Welsh Ministers. Negotiations have started between the Welsh and UK Governments about the Welsh Ministers role in respect of rail franchising.
- The current Wales and Border franchise map should be taken as the starting point for the next franchise. Any proposed changes to the franchise map in advance of the new franchise being awarded would be subject to consultation by the Department for Transport (DfT) with the WG.
- The preferred franchise model needs to be defined well in advance of procurement action for a new franchise commencing.
- Important that the rolling stock expectations for the next franchise are clearly defined. Financial considerations associated with rolling stock requirements set out for the next franchise would need to be considered as part of the work undertaken to specify the franchise.
- A consultation will be carried out by the relevant franchising authority before a franchise specification is finalised.

##### 1.4 Rugby Public Transport Planning. WG response February 2016

- WG fully supports the need for an enhanced Cardiff Central station. WG has already begun discussions with both Network Rail (NR) and the DfT in relation to potential NR Control Period 6 (CP6) investment and emphasised the need for any project to address current capacity constraints.
- The Cardiff Area Signalling Renewal scheme is a major project for the Wales rail network, and WG continues to push NR to deliver it as soon as possible.

- The key importance of rail infrastructure in properly catering for major events in Cardiff and delivering a positive passenger experience. Essential that NR and the UK Government ensure that major projects, such as the Great Western Main Line Electrification, the Cardiff Area Signalling Renewal scheme and the proposed upgrade of Cardiff Central station deliver the necessary improvements, to time and to budget.

### **1.5 Bus & Community Transport Services in Wales. WG response April 2016**

- WG will continue to consider the approach to eligibility for concessionary fares to ensure funding is used effectively and continues to offer value for money in advancement of policies to make Wales a more equal nation.
- Reimbursement rates available for mandatory concessionary fares for all operators providing local public transport are subject to review.
- WG continues to press the UK Government for an improved devolved settlement in respect of functions for public transport in Wales as part of the ongoing negotiations on the Wales Bill.
- Voluntary Welsh Bus Quality Standards were published on 24<sup>th</sup> March. Bus operators providing eligible public transport services will be required to meet the core requirements within the standard by March 2017 to maintain their eligibility for payments from the Bus Services Support Grant.
- WG is committed to the delivery of an integrated multi modal ticketing scheme to be available to passengers using bus, rail and other metro services. The Wales and Borders rail franchise will be awarded in time for the new train operating company to commence services in October 2018. Participation in a regional / national smart or digital ticketing scheme, when in place and operational, has been included as an enhanced requirement within the Voluntary Welsh Bus Quality Standard 2016.

### **1.6 Priorities for the Future of Welsh Rail Infrastructure. WG response April 2016**

- WG continues to press the UK government for the devolution of powers in relation to the direction of infrastructure management in Wales in order to deliver our aspirations for rail services across the network.
- WG continues to press the UK Government for greater transparency and accountability for rail infrastructure in Wales, as is the case in Scotland.
- Assurances on the delivery of the electrification of the South Wales Main Line to Swansea have been sought from the Chair of NR, the Secretary of State for Transport, and the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Transport.
- The UK Government's recognition of the importance of taking account of wider economic benefits when appraising rail investment schemes is welcome and needs to feature prominently when making investment decisions in respect of Wales' rail infrastructure.
- WG will be actively engaged in discussions considering how greater autonomy for the Wales Route can be achieved while also ensuring that matters transcending the route boundary are dealt with appropriately.
- WG has demonstrated to the UK Government that cross-border services currently operated by the Wales and Borders franchise should remain in the franchise following the transfer of rail franchising functions.

## **2. The Welsh Government Rail Franchise Consultation, 22<sup>nd</sup> January-18<sup>th</sup> March 2016**

- From early 2017 it is expected WG will become a franchising authority with responsibility for awarding the next Wales and Borders franchise, likely to start in October 2018.
- The WG vision is to see a not for dividend model. Transport for Wales, its not for dividend company, will deliver the next franchise as a modern high quality service, contributing to an integrated public transport system across Wales.
- Based on the outcome of the consultation, wider public engagement and discussions with the railway industry, WG will develop detailed proposals which will be the subject of further consultation and public dialogue.

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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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