



# North Pembroke Transport Forum Fforwm Trafnidiaeth Gogledd Penfro

## October News Briefing, 2020

### Welsh Government to take control of rail operations

Ken Skates, Minister for Economy, Transport and North Wales. Cabinet Statement, 22<sup>nd</sup> October.

*Some introductory points:*

- Support has been provided to: (1) ensure delivery of critical services at the peak of the coronavirus pandemic and (2) be prepared for the difficult winter months to come. Although passenger numbers dropped to as low as 5% of pre-Covid numbers at the peak of the pandemic, this support enabled those who depend on public transport to continue to use these services.
- As restrictions have been eased, with a gradual increase in passenger numbers, clearly this will now be impacted by the resurgence of the virus. However, it remains important to plan for the post pandemic demand on rail services.
- Stark economic challenges remain for rail and bus sectors. The Government will work with all partners, including Transport for Wales (TfW), Keolis and Amey, to ensure provision of the most stable platform possible from which to build back from this crisis.
- The delivery of key commitments - such as the creation of the Metro, the delivery of brand-new rolling stock for the Wales and Borders rail network and other improvements - remain a priority for TfW and partners. TfW continues to work closely with all partners and their supply chain to ensure they deliver on plans and services with safety as the top priority.

*'Building back better'. Points for a delivery model:*

- TfW have agreed the principles of a new publicly owned model, which will allow them to continue to put customers and communities at the heart of everything they do, with safety as their first priority.
- The new relationship between TfW, Keolis and Amey will be made up of three key components:
  1. From February 2021, the delivery of day to day rail services will be the responsibility of a new publicly-owned subsidiary of TfW, allowing government to have an even greater role in the delivery of rail services in Wales and the borders, reflective of the new commercial realities of the post Covid-19 environment. With huge uncertainty over passenger revenue, this provides us with the most stable financial base to manage rail services as we emerge from the pandemic.
  2. Infrastructure management and transformation of the Welsh Government-owned Core Valley Lines will continue to be delivered under the current contract. This will provide stability for the programme to ensure effective delivery of the south Wales Metro transformation work which is already underway.
  3. A new partnership with Keolis and Amey, led by TfW, will be developed, which will allow the people of Wales to continue to draw on the international experience and expertise of these partners to help TfW to deliver important commitments such as integrated ticketing, on demand transport systems, cross modal design and delivery, in addition to the ongoing integration of light and heavy rail.

*Further Ministerial points:*

- 'I have asked Transport for Wales to start the detailed discussions and implementation based on the principles outlined in an agreement with Keolis and Amey. I have asked them to provide updates to members in due course, as the transition to the new delivery model gets underway'.
- 'I want to be clear with members that there are some difficult days ahead and some difficult decisions ahead as we come to terms with the new economic realities of coronavirus. Many public services across Wales are now more expensive to deliver than they were prior to the crisis and this is true of bus and rail as a result of the sudden reduction in patronage, which is an important funding source for the network. However, our ambition to continue to deliver a high quality public transport system remains, to ensure that our wider climate change and social

justice priorities are met. Whatever the future looks like, good quality, integrated public transport is critical'.

- 'I am sure members will share our desire to see Transport for Wales and partners continue to deliver on our ambitious plans for the future and I hope that members will welcome this update which will create a platform for building back better as we all adapt to the post-Covid-19 world'.

For the full statement *Visit* <https://gov.wales/written-statement-future-rail-update>.

## **Transport for Wales Bulletin, 23<sup>rd</sup> October**

### *Restrictions on Public Transport*

The Welsh Government is introducing new restrictions to help reduce the spread of coronavirus from 18:00 on Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2020. These restrictions will remain in place until 00:01 on Monday 9<sup>th</sup> November 2020.

During this period:

- Please stay at home unless you have a reasonable excuse.
- Only travel if your journey's essential.
- Please check before you travel as TfW will be running a reduced number of rail services and some services may also change or be cancelled at short notice.
- Rail services from Wales to England or those operated by TfW in England will not change.

If you need to make an essential journey between Wales and England, please remember that different regulations and guidance may be in place in the different countries of the UK. You must follow this guidance.

*Visit* <https://trc.cymru/travel-safer> for more information.

## **A South West Wales Connected Community Rail Partnership Website Report**

### *The Resurrection of Fishguard & Goodwick Station and The Return of the Station Cat*

Following its closure in 1964, Fishguard and Goodwick station stood empty and neglected for decades. The derelict station building looked beyond saving, but just short of a decade ago, work began to bring it back to life and reinstate the station.

In 2012 it reopened, but some of the locals felt the station was still incomplete. It was missing the much-loved memorial stone to a cat that had kept the station rodent-free in the 1920s. While many people remembered the memorial, nobody knew what had happened to it, so the decision was made to commission a replica. This was arranged by North Pembrokeshire Transport Forum, who also went a step further and commissioned a cat sculpture to accompany the plaque. The sculpture, created by local artist Darren Yeadon, was finally unveiled in January 2017.

This was not the only welcome new addition at the station: four years ago, Tanya McVeigh opened a café in the station building, which had stood empty since it re-opened. An experienced local café owner, Tanya embraced the project wholeheartedly, knocking the two separate units within the station into one to make room for plenty of indoor seating. The result is a hugely popular café that majors in generous helpings of classic café fare – cooked breakfasts, jacket potatoes, burgers, baguettes, paninis and traditional puddings.

Today the station continues to thrive, and as well as providing transport and refreshments for locals, it makes it easy for day trippers to reach Fishguard and Goodwick – maybe pausing at the station for a bite to eat and to say hello to the station cat.

For more *Visit* <http://www.southwestwales.co/2020/08/17/the-resurrection-of-fishguard-and-goodwick-station-the-return-of-the-station-cat/>.

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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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