



North Pembrokeshire Transport Forum Fforwm Trafnidiaeth Gogledd Penfro

News Briefing – January 2016

Fishguard & Goodwick Rail Station

Pembrokeshire County Council has commenced work on the addition of a toilet block to the station building. The Council has informed the Forum that it will be operational by the end of February.

National Assembly Enterprise & Business Committee Inquiry into Bus & Community Transport Services in Wales

The Committee's Bus and Community Transport Services report is due to be published later in the spring.

National Assembly Enterprise & Business Committee Welsh Rail Infrastructure Inquiry

The Committee is looking at the priorities for the future of Welsh rail infrastructure. While the Welsh Government (WG) has powers to fund infrastructure investment, primary responsibility for funding Network Rail (NR), and the development of the Welsh network, rests with the UK Government. The Committee will consider responses to the inquiry consultation that concluded on 14th January and will hold oral evidence sessions during the 2016 spring term.

Consultation respondents were asked to express their views on the following topics:

- High level priorities for the development of rail infrastructure to provide the capacity and connectivity necessary to support the social and economic well-being of Wales.
- How far WG's rail infrastructure priorities, including those in the National Transport Finance Plan, and the Ministerial Task Force on North Wales Transport report meet the needs of Wales.
- How the development and exploitation of rail infrastructure in England affects Wales, and vice versa.
- The impact on Wales of key planned developments in England including High Speed Rail, electrification, Northern Power House / Transport for the North, and wider devolution of responsibility for rail within England.
- How WG can best engage with and influence infrastructure developments in England and the development of passenger and freight services using the network.
- Whether the periodic review process meets the needs of Wales and takes account of the needs of Welsh passenger and freight users, and how this should be developed.
- The effectiveness of the NR Wales Route and whether the approach to delivery of network management, maintenance, renewal and enhancement functions are effective in delivering value for money, capacity, frequency, speed, reliability and handling disruption for passengers and freight users in Wales.
- The fact that funding for Welsh rail infrastructure is not devolved. The advantages, disadvantages, opportunities and risks potentially associated with devolution.

Welsh Government Proposals for a Voluntary Welsh Bus Quality Standard

Calls for responses to the Welsh Government (WG) consultation on these proposals concluded on 29th January. The proposals were developed by the Bus Policy Advisory Group (comprising representatives from local authorities, bus operators, and passenger and disability groups).

Background: The Quality Standard, a national standard for Wales, sets out standards deemed to be essential, and all must be met to qualify for WG Bus Service Support Grant (BSSG) payments. The Enhanced Quality Standard contains requirements that will attract points towards the score that will determine whether the enhanced standard has been achieved. The points values attributed to each element of this standard may be varied between different regions to allow flexibility to tailor enhanced requirements to better meet local needs. Each region/authority will be able to decide which of the Enhanced Quality Standards are most appropriate to its area to determine how many points to allocate to each requirement. Operators should be allowed sufficient time to meet desired standards.

Key benefits:

- Sets a consistent, minimum standard which enables LAs to respond to local needs through adjusting the weighting of enhanced standards.
- Provides flexibility to adjust the percentage split between essential and enhanced standards.
- Supports a phased introduction of enhanced standards to minimise the risk of unintended consequences (e.g. service changes).
- Provides the ability to add and remove standards over time to drive up standards.

Impacts:

- Enables the collection of standard, measurable data that will help identify trends in service provision.
- Enables the review and revision of the standard and encourages further service improvements.

Punctuality and Reliability: Although recognised as a core quality element, they are not included in either category, as current resources do not facilitate a consistent measurement mechanism. Further work is recommended, aiming to include this as a requirement within the essential Quality Standard in future, as evolving GPRS based technology should lead to opportunities to measure these elements more efficiently and accurately.

Visit <http://gov.wales/consultations/transport/160107-bus-quality-standard/?lang=en> for further information.

Welsh Government Rail Franchise Consultation

The purpose of this consultation is to inform stakeholders of the WG's ambitions for rail over the next 15 years (to 2030), and to provide an opportunity to contribute views on what should be prioritised for delivery by the Wales and Borders franchise. The WG is committed to engaging with stakeholders to ensure that the needs of the communities are met. The consultation period begins on 2nd January 2016 and ends on 18th March 2016.

Background: From early 2017, it is expected the WG will become a franchising authority with responsibility for awarding the next Wales and Borders franchise, likely to start in October 2018. In preparation and with the agreement of the UK Government, the WG is developing the future strategic approach for rail services in the Wales and Borders area. Its vision is to see a not for dividend model with a strong connection with the communities it serves. "Transport for Wales", its not for dividend company, will deliver the next Wales and Borders franchise as a modern high quality service, contributing to an integrated public transport system across Wales.

Railway Infrastructure: The WG will continue to press the UK Government for the devolution of powers in relation to railway infrastructure to Welsh Ministers, to urge the UK Government to deliver investment in the railway infrastructure in Wales and work closely with partners to influence industry plans for delivery for future Control Periods.

Next Steps: Following the consultation, the WG will publish a summary of the views expressed during this engagement. Views expressed will inform development of the detailed proposals and specification for the award of the next Wales and Borders Franchise, together with rail services to be provided as part of the south east Wales Metro concept. Based on the outcome of this consultation, wider public engagement and discussions with the railway industry, the WG will develop detailed proposals, which will be the subject of further consultation and public dialogue.

Consultation Document: The document invites respondents to answer a range of questions and offers the opportunity to express their views on the future of rail services in the Wales and Borders area. The answers will assist in the development of detailed proposals for the next Welsh rail franchise, which will be the subject of further consultation and public dialogue.

Visit <http://gov.wales/consultations/transport/160121-rail-franchise/?lang=en> to download the consultation document and response form.

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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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