



North Pembrokeshire Transport Forum Fforwm Trafnidiaeth Gogledd Penfro

News Briefing – April 2017

Trains

Economy, Infrastructure & Skills Committee's Rail Franchise & the Metro Inquiry

On 9th April representatives from Network Rail (NR), the Department for Transport (DfT), the engineering sector, as well as the Cabinet Secretary for Economy and Infrastructure and the Director of Transport and ICT Infrastructure met with the Committee.

Points of interest from the perspective of North Pembrokeshire & the South West Wales area

Network Rail

- More traditional refranchising procurement programmes...roughly take about two years...For this procurement...we're doing a lot more within the same period of time
- We met with all four bidders separately and we had the opportunity to look at some of their timetable proposals and give feedback...We'll be meeting them again in a few weeks' time to see how they can respond to that...A dialogue opportunity the normal franchise process wouldn't give us.
- We're at the process now of business planning for control period 6. We've engaged with all four bidders on that process, so that they can be aware of our renewals requirements for control period 6, and they can factor those into their bid plans as they see fit.
- There's a lot more deeper and closer collaboration that we'd like to do, both with the operator and development partner...but also with TfW and with WG as well to drive that collaboration, both at an operational, delivery level, but also at a strategic investment level as well.
- Electrification to Swansea is in the plan for control period 6...Earlier this month, the first Hitachi trains ran into south Wales, in test mode. The DfT has specified that they're now bi-mode...Passengers will benefit from those trains running as diesels to Swansea, and I think the time differences are very marginal. They'll still benefit from newer trains, better Wi-Fi, better facilities.
- Whatever we have for the next period, whether it's 10 or 15 years, has to have the opportunity to adapt and respond to enhancements, but also to the changing face of the economy in Wales...It's got to be flexible, forward looking and not constrained by something that was thought up today and may not be fit for 15 years' time.

Department for Transport

- To ensure that Welsh Ministers have the ability to proceed with the procurement, we've agreed an agency agreement, which has allowed them to start the process and shortlist bidders...and we're in the process of agreeing a further agency agreement with them to allow them to proceed through that procurement...We anticipate it will have effect...before the end of this year...to make sure that that has effect before the WG...awards the contract to the successful bidder...very early in 2018.
- We've been working closely with colleagues from TfW...We've shared our experience of DfT refranchising procurements...held a workshop for TfW officials on the latest developments in DfT...We meet fortnightly to progress issues.
- Regarding new rolling stock and the accessibility regulations, the department's policy is that this is a matter for the bidders to manage. They have to propose...as part of their submission, that they will comply with the regulations that will be in force from the beginning of 2020...We have facilitated discussions...between the parties concerned...where we could help them...But, ultimately, it's for WG to ensure that their bidders propose something that is required...it is the responsibility of the railway industry, as in the rolling stock companies and the train operating companies, to ensure that they are compliant. The role of franchising authorities is to make sure that the process that they run, or the way in which they manage the franchises, is taking the operators in that direction.

Ken Skates AM (Cabinet Secretary for Economy & Infrastructure) and Simon Jones (Director Transport & ICT infrastructure)

- We're going to maintain our call for electrification through to Swansea at the earliest opportunity.
- We're writing the specification with the bidders...The draft specification to give...the bidders a dry run at putting a bid in against that specification...[that] will allow us to flush out...risks...and, if we

need to change the specification because there's some area where there's a big risk...we can sort that out that and...decide do we want the bidders to take that risk, because that risk is best managed by the bidders, or are they pricing in a risk that, actually, would be better managed by us...Sometime in July [we will say]...'Here's the specification...go and produce your price and then we will handle it in the same way as we would handle a normal process.'

- The TfW consultation should further inform TfW as to what....passengers...wish to see delivered as part of the franchise...for TfW to assess how the bidders have responded to that consultation...We'll be able to judge what best aligns with citizens' expectations, based on those consultations.
- [Regarding rolling stock accessibility] As part of the bidding process, we expect to see solutions to be offered to TfW for evaluation, but we've been very clear that all rolling stock must comply with the regulations that are going to be introduced in 2020 as part of the procurement process, and we cannot compromise on that.

To consult the transcript visit <http://senedd.assembly.wales/mqIssueHistoryHome.aspx?IId=15158>.

Transport for Wales Consultation

Visit <https://consultations/transport-wales-design-wales-and-borders-rail-service-including-metro> to download a copy of the consultation document and information about submitting responses. Or by email: contact@transportfor.wales and by phone: 029 2167 3434. Responses are due by 23rd May.

As part of the consultation process a series of workshops to gather views on the new services were held in Shrewsbury, Llandudno, Nantgarw, Carmarthen and Aberystwyth between 20th March and 3rd April 2017.

Points of interest from the perspective of North Pembrokeshire & the South West Wales area

1 Information provision

What information is required

- Real-time information for rail departures/arrivals.
- Information about next stops. Passengers need confirmation about the train they are on and where it is stopping.
- Planned disruptions for all operators.
- Clear or more information regarding needs of disabled passengers and cyclists.
- Onward journeys using other transport modes.
- Station facilities. E.g. steps, lifts, toilets, refreshments, shops, bus stops.

Where to get information

- Preference for a single body issuing information through online and offline channels.
- More accessible information about fares and timetables (assumption that everyone uses the internet).
- On platforms at all stations.
- Better information during disruptions.

How to present information

- Better links on website about location of ticket machines; need for them at all stations.
- Information to be available in Welsh. Bilingual announcements to be pronounced correctly. Order of wording is often incorrect. More Welsh being spoken on the train – such as hello, goodbye, etc.
- Accessible to blind/partially sighted people and those with hearing loss. Lack of oral information, people on hand at stations and on trains.
- Difficult for internationals who don't speak English well, with signage and staff.
- Platform CIS screens and signage need to be more accurate.
- Better advertising of planned disruptions.

2 Timetables, Ticketing & Fares

- Different timetables for weekdays and weekends is confusing.
- Timetable keeps changing without giving notice to passengers.
- Too many different types of ticket – with variations of conditions. Passengers need to know they are getting the best price for their journey.
- Not enough information on how to purchase the Pembrokeshire Rail Card – Would like to see these products in the next franchise.

- Incentives for passengers – loyalty schemes for those who use public transport, for off-peak travel (same for all day in rural areas – should be based on arrival instead of departure times).
- Ticketing for all modes of transport.
- Review of ticket prices. West Wales higher than average.
- Definition of peak times – to reflect geography.

3 Integration/connectivity with other modes of transport

- Integration between services and modes of transport needs to be easy to understand, promoted well, with convenient connections. Stations should be like transport hubs.
- Tight connectivity can be a real problem.
- Rolling stock, carriage of bicycles, pushchairs, prams and wheelchairs to be considered together.

4 Services & Rolling Stock

Service times and stops

- More Sunday services on every line. More Bank Holiday services. Need for earlier and later trains.
- Sunday evening services from Fishguard and Goodwick to encourage tourists.
- An extra train or more carriages on the mid-afternoon Fishguard service for visitors.
- Off-peak services and rural services need improvement.
- Review request stops – normal stops.

Rolling stock

- Lack of capacity on trains – bigger trains are needed.
- The need for tourists to be considered as well as domestic and commuter needs – clear information, luggage storage, special offers, catering, table seats; views from windows.
- Tables to work on for commuters and long distance passengers travelling to/from meetings.
- Toilets essential, especially for older travellers, should be clean and safe. Additional accessible toilets required.
- Sufficient, adequate luggage space. Flexible storage.
- Clear rules regarding conflict between bikes/buggies/wheelchairs etc.
- Designated doors with ramps for wheelchair/push chair access, or retractable ramps on all doors.
- Not enough room for guide dogs.
- Planning catering needs in advance.
- Refreshment provision for journeys over 2 hours. Wider range of food.

5 Staffing & Stations

- Second person (guard) to dispatch the train, check tickets and offer onboard reassurance.
- Onboard staff should be safety trained, but focus should be on passenger information and assistance.
- Other responsibilities: door operation, enforcement of seat reservations, information and assistance relating to unforeseen events, including passenger illness, help with anti-social behaviour. Essential where stations are unmanned for the security and safety of passengers.
- More station staff and extended opening hours. Staff at stations important for providing advice.
- Warm, dry shelters with more seats; heated waiting rooms.
- Security or CCTV; electric charging points, mobile phone signals.

6 Promotion

- Promote activities that can take place on the train.
- Marketing and promotions – details about fares, timetables, accessibility.

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'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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