



# North Pembrokeshire Transport Forum Fforwm Trafnidiaeth Gogledd Penfro

## Consultation: Economy, Infrastructure & Skills Committee Priorities During the Fifth Assembly

### INTRODUCTION

The North Pembrokeshire Transport Forum (NPTF) is an independent voluntary group that works for the provision of an effective integrated transport system to, from and within North Pembrokeshire, promotes the benefits of public transport and works towards the greater use of public transport systems.

NPTF supports strategic objectives that:

- Provide for the greater integration and interchange between different modes of transport.
- Put in place public transport services that meet the needs of individuals and communities.
- Promote social inclusion by means of an affordable, accessible public transport system that works to remove access and mobility barriers for all public transport users.
- Encourage more sustainable modes of transport and reduce the need for travel by car.

NPTF's response will focus exclusively on transport and highlight the transport issues of particular importance to North Pembrokeshire, as well as the broader South West Wales region. NPTF also recognises the significant role that transport plays with regard to economic development, infrastructure, employment, skills, research and development.

### CONSULTATION RESPONSE

NPTF welcomes the opportunity to set out priority areas for the transport work programme of the Economy, Infrastructure and Skills Committee during the Fifth Assembly. In our view one of the top priority areas should involve reviewing and taking forward the impressive work that was done in the transport inquiries that were carried out by the Enterprise and Business Committee in the Fourth Assembly.

### ENTERPRISE AND BUSINESS COMMITTEE TRANSPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee looked at bus, community and rail services, in addition to active travel (walking and cycling), as well as integrated transport. The following inquiry recommendations are of particular significance to the North Pembrokeshire and South West Wales regions.

*Integrated Public Transport in Wales, published May 2013.*

- Prioritise walking and cycling links to public transport services and infrastructure in the delivery of the Active Travel (Wales) Bill.
- Enhance walking and cycling infrastructure and provision for bikes on buses and trains.
- Prioritise service coordination and high quality information, including quality standards and restrictions on the frequency of timetable changes in new bus funding arrangements and Bus and Community Transport Network Strategies.
- Press all transport operators to work together and with relevant stakeholders to implement best practice in coordinating timetables, connecting services and publishing real time information to provide seamless links between bus, rail and community transport networks.
- Ensure inter-modal integration is a key component of the new Wales and Borders Franchise, which should encompass integrated information, ticketing and timetabling.
- Work with relevant stakeholders to deliver consistent and high quality community transport provision.
- Provide greater certainty over longer-term funding to enable community transport operators to plan and invest in the future.

*The Future of the Wales and Borders Rail Franchise, published December 2013.*

- Protect and enhance cross-border routes within the current franchise map.

- Work with the UK Dept for Transport to ensure that Welsh interests are reflected in the procurement of new franchises, in particular the Great Western and West Coast franchises.
- Launch a major public consultation with all stakeholders in the franchise area and put passenger needs at the heart of the next franchise.
- Increase train reliability and punctuality, and include objectives such as comfort, facilities provided, cleanliness and customer satisfaction.
- Set the need for high standards for stations and a requirement to improve station facilities.
- Simplify ticketing arrangements and establish a fares policy which controls fare increases and provides value for money.
- Set the need for integration with other modes of transport.
- Encourage more people to integrate rail travel with walking and cycling.

*Bus & Community Transport Services in Wales, published March 2016.*

- Develop a Community Transport Strategy in consultation with the sector to clarify its role in an integrated network.
- Review good practice in the provision of financial and policy support for bus services and community transport to consider what lessons can be learnt and applied in Wales.
- Explore the current approach to eligibility for concessionary fares to ensure that scarce resources are being targeted most effectively to help those in greatest need and consider how any change might impact on the community transport sector.
- Review the reimbursement rates available to community transport operators to ensure they are not losing money and ensure that future funding settlements for concessionary fares provide the greatest possible certainty for both bus and community transport operators.

The report also notes that the Committee supports the Welsh Government's calls for greater powers over buses.

*Priorities for the Future of Welsh Rail Infrastructure, published March 2016.*

- Seek absolute assurance that the electrification of the South Wales Mainline will continue as a single project, without a break, all the way to Swansea.
- Even without formal devolution of infrastructure powers through legislation, Welsh Government must be given greater responsibility for rail infrastructure, including input into the Period Review, HLOS development, project delivery and governance of Network Rail which must be more accountable to Welsh Government.

*Active Travel: The Start of the Journey, published February 2016.*

- The Welsh Government should have a specific budget line dedicated to supporting active travel. The budget for active travel should be used for both supporting active travel infrastructure projects and promoting active travel.
- The level of funding for active travel should be reviewed.
- The Welsh Government should make sufficient resources available to local authorities for developing their Integrated Network Maps.
- The Welsh Government should initiate a national population level campaign to promote the benefits of active travel. The campaign should include approaches aimed at reaching all sections of Welsh society, including hard-to-reach groups.

## CONCLUDING REMARKS

Although a wide variety of transport services and facilities are provided in Wales, gaps in service provision still make it difficult for many people to travel by public transport. This is particularly evident in rural areas or other localities where bus and train services are infrequent and the results of a missed connection can have very serious consequences.

Effective integration and coordination of services is therefore of critical importance in the transport scenario. The seamless systems that connect the different transport modes in countries such as the Netherlands and Denmark show that this can be done. NPTF believes that it is now time for Wales to aim for this target - whilst maintaining robust connections - and to put measures in place that will remove the remaining disincentives that stand in the way.