



North Pembrokeshire Transport Forum Fforwm Trafnidiaeth Gogledd Penfro

November News Briefing, 2021

Climate Change, Environment and Infrastructure Committee Committee's Priorities Consultation. Closed 10th September. 119 responses

Introduction

The consultation was set up to help inform the Committee's decisions, gathering views on what respondents think its main priorities should be. In particular:

- The Minister and Deputy Minister's priorities for the next 12-18 months and which the Committee should be focusing on over the next year or so.
- Any other subject you think should be prioritised over the next 12-18 months; setting out why you think it should be a priority for the Committee.

Selected extracts from the Responses

The following group responses (in alphabetical order) have been chosen from the perspective of the North Pembrokeshire Transport Forum. The Forum is an independent voluntary group that works for the provision of effective accessible multi-modal transport, to from and within the region; recognising the vital role transport plays in the sustainable development of rural areas.

1. Bus Users UK

- There is a very real danger that, post-Covid, we will see a car-led recovery...There needs to be greater promotion of the benefit of sustainable transport options such as bus and rail, backed by a Welsh Government campaign encouraging people back onto public transport.
- In rural areas, buses carry fewer people but make a vital contribution to the communities they serve. They are a lifeline, providing access to work, training, education, shops, leisure facilities and health services. Evidence shows that improving transport for rural communities reduces social isolation and improves mental health, particularly among young adults.

2. Great Western Railway

- We have reviewed your priorities for the next 12-18 months and note the intention to look at roads, buses, freight, ports and rail with reference to the South Wales Metro schemes.
- We would also very much like to see a wider discussion about rail to include mainline services, and how they also form part of the answer for local journeys, and for business and visitor journeys to and from Wales.
- We regard completion of the Great Western Electrification Programme (GWEP) as originally conceived is an immediate priority, with wiring extended west to Swansea. This would permit electric operation of the high speed service to Paddington, while also giving opportunity for TFW to consider operation of local services by electric or bi-mode (battery, not necessarily diesel) traction.

3. Sustrans

- Encouraging more people to make everyday journeys on foot or by bike would reduce the number of short-distance car journeys and tackle emissions.
- Our research tells us that two-thirds of both men and women think cycle safety needs to be improved and 80% say that good quality infrastructure is key to helping us increase the number of people cycling.
- Investment into infrastructure for sustainable transport and active travel is needed as well as support for behaviour change programmes to ensure individuals have the confidence and skills needed to travel differently...The market is diversifying and cargo bikes, adapted cycles, tandems, trailers and more are becoming increasingly common.
- Those with protected characteristics tend to be under-represented in delivery and participation of active travel...Increasing inclusion must also be a key priority for this Government. Increase the number and diversity of people travelling actively.
- A switch to electric cars cannot be the whole solution. Instead, the focus should be on reducing the number of vehicles on the road.
- Other practical considerations of electric vehicles are around charging facilities. We have already seen chargers installed on the pavement by some local authorities in Wales and we know that households in some areas are running a cable across the pavement to charge the vehicle. This clearly disadvantages pedestrians and vulnerable road users.

4. Transport Focus

4.1 Minister and Deputy Minister's priorities for the next 12-18 months

- We do feel that transport has been significantly under-represented. Transport is an enabler for wider economic growth and should be positioned as the sustainable choice giving people access to education, work and leisure opportunities across Wales.
- The Committee has a key role in ensuring transport remains a high priority for Welsh Government.
- The Wales Transport Strategy sets ambitious plans for modal shift and active travel. These commitments now need to be turned into reality, with all partners focused on delivering sustainable and inclusive transport.
- Our research on sustainable travel shows that people want to see more sustainable choices being made cheaper and more readily available than alternatives.

4.2 Further priority areas

Getting passengers back on board

- Pre-pandemic priorities are still just as important, with investment needed to improve punctuality, reliability, value for money fares, flexible tickets and customer-facing staff particularly to provide support during disruption.
- Returning to rail and getting passengers back on buses...a distinct disparity between those who have used public transport and those who have not used public transport recently – the latter are much more concerned about using transport again. A cohesive message needs to be supported from the top to show transport is clean and safe and ready to use and targeted through channels to reach and give confidence to those who have not been travelling.

Williams-Shapps review and transition to Great British Railways

- The rail industry must be more cohesive in the way it speaks and acts towards passengers...This highlights the need for more joined up working across the industry, and for a stronger sense of overall accountability for decisions and service delivery, that is visible to passengers.
- Passengers value the concept of a national network, with interaction, connectivity and a seamless delivery of service, with good standards of information to 'hold their hand' and give them confidence in the ability to make joined-up journeys. It is essential that implementation across both sides of the border is scrutinised and harmonised.

Bus strategy and future Bill

- Planning work towards the Bws Cymru strategy is beginning. It is essential that plans are aligned with key priorities for improvement identified by both passengers and non-users. Our research shows top priorities are buses running more often, going to more places and being on time. There is a vital need for the strategy to set out measures that both regain the confidence of lapsed passengers and improve services to attract new passengers and effect modal shift.
- Fundamentally, key barriers to travel need to be addressed:

Cost: Value for money in return for the price of the ticket, availability of discounts and flexible tickets, comparison of the expense when considering an alternative, especially when a group is travelling together.

Convenience: Including availability of the network, ability to make door-to-door journeys, time taken, potential to work or relax and familiarity of always travelling a particular way or not knowing how to do it another way. Smart ticketing needs to be a convenient option that is easy to use and makes passengers lives easier.

Complexity: Lack of familiarity with journey planning, especially factoring in connections, difficulties with timetables, interchange or access, availability of facilities and uncertainties undermining confidence to travel.

- Alongside these is the need to underpin recovery with investment in services. Following announcement of the UK Government's National Bus Strategy, transport authorities in England are planning to implement enhanced partnerships and are preparing bus service improvement plans. Transport Focus is engaged in supporting this with a series of guides and toolkits⁷, drawing from our extensive experience and insight. This represents one potential approach that could be considered. However there is a clear need to underpin recovery and improvement with effective funding, including longer timescales to support long term decisions and investment.

The Responses

To access the PDF documents visit <https://senedd.wales/committee/741>, then scroll down and click on Committee News. Finally select and click on '*The responses to the Committee and consultation on its priorities for the Sixth Senedd have been published*'.

The Forum's work is supported by:

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