

Policy Review of Public Transport in Wales

Conwy County Borough Council endorses the views expressed by the WLGA , the North Wales Economic Forum and ATCO. We believe that the current organisational structure works well and that the NWEF is the ideal body for sub regional matters. The NWEF is able to call upon the expertise and experience of the six authorities, plus Cheshire and other bodies such as the CBI. Rather than set up a new body it would be better to provide some funding for the NWEF to buy in expertise from the authorities or from outside as and when necessary. Authorities could then take on additional staff if necessary to cover for time spend on NWEF work.

My authority would wish to stress particularly the need for the NAFW to make full use of its' devolved powers under the forthcoming Transport Act. In particular to allow authorities to work with bus operators to establish Quality Contracts on existing commercial routes using de-minimis payments under a best value regime rather than tendering. This needs to be accompanied by increased revenue grants as indicated in the Local Transport Plan so that we can improve and enhance the network and achieve significant growth in usage. The work on Quality Partnerships undertaken by TAS indicated that local authorities need to provide almost all of the investment if there are to be significant improvements in quality in a rural area. Using Quality Contracts would secure this process. It would enable us to protect fare/ service levels and protect operators from the cherry picking competition that has undermined some of the work done elsewhere. It is particularly important in an area where tourism is such a significant part of the economy that we have stable services that can be promoted and advertised many months in advance.