

## Enterprise and Business Committee

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Meeting Venue:  
**Committee Room 3 – Senedd**

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Meeting date:  
**24 January 2013**

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Meeting time:  
**09:00**

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Cynulliad  
Cenedlaethol  
Cymru

National  
Assembly for  
Wales



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### Agenda

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#### **Pre-meeting (09.15 – 09.30)**

#### **1. Introductions, apologies and substitutions**

#### **2. Inquiry into Integrated Public Transport – Evidence session (9.30 – 10.45) (Pages 1 – 48)** **Regional Transport Consortia**

Iwan Prys-Jones, Taith

John Forsey, Tracc

Steve Piliner, Swwitch

Mark Youngman, SEWTA

#### **Break (10.45 – 11.00)**

#### **3. Inquiry into Integrated Public Transport: Ministerial Scrutiny Session (11.00 – 12.00) (Pages 49 – 63)**

Carl Sargeant, Minister for Local Government and Communities

Bayo Dosunmu, Deputy Director, Public Transport

Huw Thomas, Senior Manager Business, Community Transport

**De-brief (12.00 – 12.10)**

## **NAfW – Enterprise and Business Committee - Inquiry into Integrated Public Transport**

Written evidence from Taith (North Wales Regional Transport Consortium)

### **Background**

TAITH is the Transport Consortium for North Wales. It is a formally constituted Joint Committee of the six North Wales County Councils. Its remit is to develop an integrated transport strategy for North Wales, delivering the aims and objectives of the Wales Transport Strategy in the region. In common with the other three Regional Transport Consortia, the Regional Transport Plan (RTP) was completed in 2009, and covers strategic interventions in North Wales to 2015.

### **Introduction**

Taith welcomes the opportunity to submit information to the Enterprise and Business Committee review of integrated public transport.

In providing written evidence to the Committee, Taith has focused on addressing the issues that in particular it wishes to bring to the committee's attention without repeating much of the material provided by other respondents.

### **QUESTIONS**

#### **How can the integration of rail, bus and community transport services in Wales be supported and improved to meet the needs of communities and businesses in both rural and urban Wales?**

Improvements to integration between transport modes as part of the daily lives of residents, business and visitors in terms of work, education, health shopping, leisure and other activities is essential as costs of transport and demand for accessibility increases. In determining arrangements for integration of public transport in and to/ from Wales the needs of industry especially access to employment and freight transport must also be taken in to account. Integration of transport services must happen in planning, management and delivery of transport services.

The planning framework for transport in Wales is at best fragmented - not only between modes but in the case of buses within the mode as well. At the strategic planning level the overarching document is the Wales Transport Strategy (WTS) which is delivered with the context of the current Programme for Government (PfG) of the current administration.

Supporting the WTS is the National Transport Plan (NTP) – prioritised in December 2011 and the four Regional Transport Plans (RTP's).

It is our view that there is scope for a revised planning framework to better deliver a suite of integrated transport interventions at a national and Regional level across Wales. It is encouraging that work done by the Simpson Compact Steering group has recognised there is scope to improve current arrangements in their work.

In the TAITH area we are acutely aware that the planning, management and delivery of integrated public transport on a cross border basis to / from England is of crucial importance to North East Wales. Accessibility to employment and services across the border can be difficult due to the different funding regimes and governance structures either side of the border. Effective working relationships are being developed through the Mersey Dee Alliance and other bodies to try and overcome these issues.

## **Buses**

Within the bus network, there are currently two types of provision, commercial and tendered / supported bus networks. With the exception of services that operate within Statutory Quality Partnership (SQP) scheme areas of which there are currently only two in Wales – there is currently no formal mechanism to plan an overall network between both types of service provision and between operators. This issue has been recognised in the report recently produced following the review of bus funding initiated by the Minister for Local Government and Communities.

Following the conclusion of the review the Welsh Government has indicated that that the Regional Transport Consortia will be taking on an additional role to develop Bus Network strategies from April 1<sup>st</sup> 2013. This role will enable better integration of the funding available and through the preparation of Regional Bus and Community Transport Network Strategies. This should allow scope for a better integrated bus network to be developed. There are concerns that the budget reductions included as part of the package will impact on both the number and frequency of services, and this will need to be managed carefully as part of the network development work.

## **Rail**

Compared to 2009 when Taith last prepared evidence to this committee's predecessor, the interface with Network Rail has improved significantly following the establishment of the Wales Route in November 2011 with its own Managing Director and local planning and operations teams. In North East Wales we have some concern that the key hub of our network, Chester, is located within the North West route; however we are assured that this will be managed appropriately within Network Rail.

At the planning level, the early engagement of the Regional Transport Consortia with Network Rail through the Long Term Planning Process and other rail schemes is strongly welcomed with the early signs suggesting that this new approach will be much more successful than the previous arrangements such as the Wales Route Planning Assessment (2007) and Route Utilisation Studies (Wales – 2008). Further work in this area is being considered by the Government as part of Wales Futures work which was formally launched by the Minister for Local Government and Communities at conference on this subject on October 1<sup>st</sup> 2012.

Taith believes that in future the level of planning integration will need to further improve between Network Rail the Welsh Government and other key stakeholders. In particular how we integrate bus services with the railway

network (and other modes) as part of an overall network remains an issue to be addressed. If we are to plan, manage and develop an effective joined up network for the benefit of the public and industry users such integration will need to be enhanced.

## **Air**

Currently there is only one internal air route in Wales, which is the RAF Valley to Cardiff International Airport Route which commenced in 2008. At the commencement of the service, public transport connections at both ends of the route were initiated. In the case of RAF Valley it is Route 4 / 4A / X4 as part of the Holyhead to Bangor service. Surface access arrangements to Cardiff Airport are being addressed through the Cardiff International Airport taskforce.

The recent announcement by the Minister for Local Government and Communities in December 2012 with the establishment of two Integrated Transport task forces (South East and North East Wales) provides an immediate focus to providing a framework to bring together an integrated transport network (planning, management, and delivery) in Wales and to and from Wales. We consider that in some cases further regulatory and legislative changes may be required beyond that which Wales currently has competence in, such as railways and in bus regulation.

The next stage of the Silk Commission Part II will provide the opportunity to look at what powers Wales should seek to gain in the future. The committee as part of its consideration of the both the written and oral evidence may wish to take a view on this.

## **How successful are Regional Transport Consortia in supporting the provision of effective, integrated public transport?**

The Regional Transport Consortia as presently constituted have the responsibility to prepare, on behalf of their constituent local authorities, a Regional Transport Plan for the management and delivery of transport interventions through their constituent local authorities. The delivery of RTP projects commenced two financial years ago and consequently implementation of many of the major projects is at an early stage.

The development of a regional plan has been positive. The position is however compromised by having interventions on the strategic network delivered through the NTP. There have not always been effective links between the two plans, although offering the RTC an opportunity to comment on the reprioritisation process of the NTP was a welcome and positive development.

The role of the RTC is changing, especially in the light of the bus funding review. We believe there is scope to further enhance the role the RTC play at a strategic regional level, to build on progress made to date, within the limited remit given to the RTC.

## **How effectively does Welsh Government policy support public transport integration?**

The WTS and NTP at a high level are clear in their intent to deliver integration of transport networks in Wales. This is however compromised by the ongoing and recent funding reductions.

Until recently the inability to drive through reform in the local bus market has been a constraint to progress. Although progress has been made in joint ticketing there is some way to go and the funding arrangements have made leading the required change difficult. The outputs from the recent bus funding review provide an opportunity to improve policy support to public transport integration. However the significant reductions in funding at the point of transition will restrict the ability of the public sector to secure the gains in the efficiency and effectiveness of the proposed networks that could arise from the forthcoming regional public transport network strategies.

As we have previously said, future integration between rail and bus networks and opportunities for other modal users to integrate still require improvement. We have recently completed a substantial report in partnership with the Welsh Government, the North East Wales Area Based Transport Study (NEWABTS). This report considers an area wide approach to transport integration to resolve severe congestion on the strategic road network. Once implemented, the outcomes of this report should offer transport improvements and reduced congestion through delivery of integrated solutions. This is a positive approach and we welcome the recent announcement by the Minister of a group to consider how the implementation of the reports recommendations can be progressed

**In particular, the Welsh Government is considering the establishment of Joint Transport Authorities in Wales, and the feasibility of operating the Wales and Borders rail franchise on a not-for-dividend basis. Additionally, the Minister for Local Government and Communities has indicated that he is considering the use of quality partnerships and contracts in delivery of bus services. How far would these proposals improve integrated public transport provision in Wales?**

Organisations or structures in themselves do not automatically improve integrated public transport provision in Wales, nor does the use of Quality Partnerships, Statutory Quality Partnerships or Quality Contracts alone achieve desired improvements. The planning, management and delivery of integrated public transport provision in Wales needs to be considered on a whole 'systems' approach. Traditional thinking in this area is no longer adequate and as part of the outputs from the Simpson Review in Highways and Transport services collaboration work streams this has been identified as a barrier.

Once the appropriate planning framework is determined then the management and delivery frameworks can be put in place to achieve the required outcomes. The output from the forthcoming Simpson Compact work streams if approved by the WLGA council on the 22<sup>nd</sup> February may lead to an improvement without the need to introduce new organisations / legislation or the fuller use of existing legislation.

## **What innovative approaches to delivery of public transport in Wales might be considered to improve integration?**

This is a broad area and has been extensively covered by others in their written evidence.

In summary the following points are relevant.

**Closer integration with the local planning process-** The forthcoming Planning Bills will provide an opportunity to strengthen the integral relationship between transport and land use.

**Closer integration with economic development.** - To ensure that the location of, and development of, industrial activity is linked to the provision of and maintenance of appropriate transport infrastructure.

**The use of spatial planning processes** - in both city region, regions and in rural areas.

## **How effectively do key stakeholders, particularly transport operators and public bodies, cooperate to ensure effective service delivery?**

This varies across the country. It is important that recently there have been significant improvements in this area – most notably with Network Rail. The internal relationships within local government and the regional transport consortia have been good and are further developing as part of the work required in delivering the Simpson Compact agenda for Transport and Highway services.

Relationships with the local bus operators have been through local authorities but with the reforms arising from the bus funding review, the RTC will take on a strategic and operational role with the local bus operators. Having regional relationships with bus operators will make it easier to develop effective regional networks.

## **How can the creation of a Network Rail Wales devolved route support effective, integrated public transport in Wales?**

The establishment of a Wales Route was welcomed by Taith. By devolving local planning, management and delivery to Wales brings the organisation both closer to its main customer (the Welsh Government) and other stakeholders.

Notwithstanding this positive statement the question of planning, management and delivery of cross border links and integration with the wider UK and international rail network remain a cause for concern.

We have also previously noted the issue of the hub of the North Wales network being in a neighbouring route, and also have concerns that many of our key services are impacted by developments in adjoining conurbations, especially Manchester and Birmingham. Developments in these areas have a profound impact on our services and effective relationships at a National UK level are critical. These can only be delivered through the Welsh Government and Network Rail.

## **What are the implications of the England and Wales High Level Output Specification and Statement of Funds Available for Control Period 5, published by the UK Government, for the development of integrated rail services in Wales?**

There are a number of positive announcements in the reports which will bring benefit to the TAITH region. These are welcomed.

The schemes which were in Wales and of relevance to Wales are included in the HLOS and Sofa for CP5 as set out in the announcement made by the Secretary of State for Transport in 2012.

The main implications concerning the detail of the schemes and timelines were set out in more detail with the recent publication of the Wales Route Strategic Business Plan on the 8<sup>th</sup> January 2013.

The two integrated transport taskforces which have been set up between two regional transport consortia and the Welsh Government will as part of their remit look to ensure that the delivery of the schemes as set out in CP5 can be supported and augmented by further schemes which will increase the cost benefit of the forthcoming Network Rail schemes.

The bigger and on-going opportunity is presented with the reform to the Transport Planning Framework in Wales and the rail futures work that is being led by the Welsh Government. This should in build the principles of integrated transport into the planning, management and delivery of transport in Wales at an earlier stage than previously possible – not just those schemes which happen to be on the shelf at the time or are 'easy to do'. The use of WelTAG at both the scheme and plan level and its recent refresh will help play a part.

## **How well is Welsh public transport integrated, particularly in relation to bus, rail and community transport services, and what factors limit integration?**

We are of the view that there is scope to better integrate transport across Wales, as many of the comments made previously in our response suggest. In particular the delivery of the integrated approach suggested by the recently completed NEWABTS report, supported by the potential improvements to the Transport Planning Framework emerging from the Simpson Compact work offer opportunities for the future

## **What steps can be taken to improve public transport integration in Wales?**

We would offer the following suggestions.

- A budget framework that allows multi mode interventions to be developed at a regional level
- Improvements to the planning framework that ensures that decisions to invest in transport interventions are made across modes so far as is possible.

- Better management arrangements at a regional level that allows bus and rail networks to be integrated through revised franchise and outcome based bus funding, leading to better integrated networks.
- Clarity over the wider planning framework that enables development opportunities and service change proposals to be integrated better with transport planning.

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## TraCC Response to the NAFW Inquiry into Integrated Transport

January 2013

### Trafnidiaeth Canolbarth Cymru

Established in 2003, Trafnidiaeth Canolbarth Cymru (TraCC) is the Regional Transport Consortium for Mid Wales and is a voluntary partnership between the three Mid Wales local authorities of Ceredigion, Powys and Gwynedd (for the Meirionnydd district). Gwynedd is also a partner in Taith, the North Wales Regional Transport Consortium. TraCC is one of four Regional Transport Consortia in Wales. TraCC has become responsible for the development of integrated transport policies and strategies at a regional (Mid Wales) level and for the development and management of associated regional transport grant funding programmes.

TraCC undertook extensive public and stakeholder consultation during the preparation of its first Regional Transport Plan (RTP) and the Plan gained Ministerial approval in December 2009. The three local authorities have now commenced delivering a range of schemes funded through RTP Capital Grant (as well as Road Safety Capital and Revenue Grants) and has supported the local authorities in securing Sustainable Travel Centre Capital Grant, regeneration grants and funding through the Local Government Borrowing Initiative (LGBI). Alongside European grants, this funding has been used to complement regional grant funding allocations to deliver a range of meaningful integrated transport schemes. TraCC submitted its first RTP Annual Progress Report in September 2011 which shows successful delivery of a programme that is beginning to make a difference. The RTP APR for 2011/12 was submitted to the Welsh Government at the end of September 2012 and has shown further improvement.

The shared TraCC RTP Vision is:

*'To plan for and deliver an integrated transport system in Mid Wales that facilitates economic development, ensures access for all to services and opportunities, sustains and improves the quality of community life and respects the environment.'*

The TraCC RTP has 10 objectives/ priorities, most of which support the aims and shared national and regional delivery of the Road Safety Delivery Plan are:

1. Reduce the demand for travel.
2. Minimise the impact of movement on the global and local environment.
3. Improve safety and security for all transport users.
4. Improve travel accessibility to services, jobs and facilities for all sectors of society.
5. Improve the quality and integration of the public transport system including the role of community transport.
6. Provide, promote and improve sustainable forms of travel.
7. Maintain and improve the existing highway and transport infrastructure.
8. Ensure travel and accessibility issues are properly integrated into land-use decisions.
9. Improve the efficiency, reliability and connectivity of movement within and between Mid Wales and the other regions of Wales and England.
10. Deliver a co-ordinated and integrated travel and transport network through effective partnership working.

More information about TraCC along with copies of publications can be found on the TraCC website: [www.tracc.gov.uk](http://www.tracc.gov.uk)

## **Integrated Transport in Mid Wales**

Integration needs to occur across all modes of transport/ travel and should include:

- Physical access (to vehicles and infrastructure);
- Service route coverage;
- Connections/ changes between different modes:
- Timetabling of services; and
- Availability of up-to-date, easy to read and understand travel information (prior to making a journey and during a journey).

Key features of passenger transport in Mid Wales include:

- A bus service network that is almost entirely viewed by bus operating companies as not being commercially viable and thus requires considerable (and increasing) financial support (subsidy) from public sector budgets;
- Higher than national average journey distances and annual bus mileage for local bus services – grown by 26% since 2000;
- Predominance of 'Hail and Ride' rather than formal/ designated stops with waiting facilities and 'flags';
- Higher than national average (9.7%) growth in rail patronage since 2008/09 , despite lower than national average service frequencies;
- Ageing population with 25% of the Mid Wales population aged over 60 years. This inevitably brings increased pressure on passenger transport service budgets and especially in connection with the Welsh Government's Concessionary Fares Scheme for the over 60s. There is a natural public expectation that there will be a sufficient number of services on which to use Concessionary Fares Smartcards in rural areas;
- On fifth of Mid Wales households without access to a car;
- Poor access to a range of services and opportunities by passenger transport, as demonstrated by Accessibility planning undertaken as part of the development of the TraCC RTP and recognised in the Welsh Government's own Spatial Plan;
- A requirement for around £9 million of public funding to support the existing local bus network;
- 28% reduction in Local Transport Services Grant (from £1,817,000 in 2007/08 to £1,307,000).

TraCC has been engaged in the recent Bus Funding Review, led by the Welsh Government and undertaken jointly with representatives from local authority RTC, the bus industry and Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA). A Report with a number of recommendations has now been published. A key recommendation of the Review is the introduction of a new grant funding arrangement for funding local authority supported and commercial local bus services – formerly known as Local Transport Services Grant (LTSG), now to be known as Regional Transport Services Grant (RTSG). The new arrangement will come into being from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2013 and will replace the current arrangement which sees LTSG provided directly to the 22 individual local authorities. The proposal is that the new RTSG will be provided to the four RTC commencing next Financial Year (2013/14).

RTC must also prepare a Regional Bus and Community Transport Network Strategy for their area. There is a clear opportunity for each RTC to better understand existing service provision, identify 'gaps' and target available resources and effort at establishing a core regional service network, supported by a range of more local 'feeder' services connecting into the core network at interchanges (,hubs') located at strategic positions on the network.

A new Business Plan is currently being developed by the Welsh Government for the TrawsCymru service network, the development of which includes TraCC/ individual local authority representation at the Strategic Board and corridor/ route levels. It is critical for TraCC that TrawsCymru services

and associated quality infrastructure contribute and form an integral part of the Mid Wales integrated transport system.

### **Progress towards better integration in Mid Wales**

To date there has been significant investment from RTP Capital Grant budgets in passenger transport facilities to support better physical integration. RTP Capital Grant is provided by the Welsh Government to TraCC local authorities and has been allocated to regionally-prioritised TraCC RTP schemes. Examples include funding support for:

- Aberystwyth Passenger Transport 'Gateway' (re-modelled Bus Station adjacent to the Railway Station);
- Improvements to interchange facilities at Brecon and Blaenau Ffestiniog;
- Support for the early development of options to improve passenger and interchange facilities at Aberystwyth Railway Station (part of the Enhanced National Station Improvement Scheme in Wales);
- Development of options for improvements to Newtown bus interchange;
- Funding of new vehicles and booking equipment for Community Transport schemes;
- Development of park and ride/ park and share options; and
- Funding of new vehicles and interchange facilities for the Bwcabus project in southern Ceredigion.

In addition, TraCC has managed the regional roll-out of the Welsh Government's Concessionary Fares Smartcards project, prepared sustainable travel guides for key Mid Wales towns (including the CILT Cymru National Transport Awards-winning Brecon Guide), purchased software to enable the local authorities to prepare departure sheets and other timetable information to a regionally-consistent standard and supported the marketing and publicity activities of Community Rail Partnerships and

At present, individual local authorities and bus companies devise timetables for local bus services, the Welsh Government and individual local authorities for TrawsCymru services and individual bus companies for commercially-operated services. This can happen at any point in the year, although registration and the provision of due notice of services is required with the Traffic Commissioner. Train Operating Companies (TOCs) draw-up timetables for rail services in consultation within (and the permissions of) the wider Rail Industry. There are normally two opportunities to change rail timetables per annum and in reality, there is little opportunity to influence any changes from a local authority perspective.

TraCC seeks to address integration between various forms of passenger transport through its Passenger Transport Working Group which includes representation from the Community Transport (voluntary) sector, Traveline Cymru, Welsh Government and by invitation, representatives from bus and rail operating companies and through the Policy and Planning Group, bringing together policy initiatives and develops possible interventions from the Passenger Transport, Active Travel and other officer working groups.

TraCC and individual local authority officers are engaged in Community Rail Partnerships (Cambrian Railways Partnership and Heart of Wales Line Forum) and TraCC has established a Regional Rail Partnership that includes representation for Arriva Trains Wales, Network Rail, Welsh and neighbouring English local authorities, Community Rail partnerships and Wales Freight Group.

As TraCC now works to prepare the required Bus and Community Transport Network Plan, it will be necessary to re-engage with public transport operators, voluntary sector and representatives of rail and bus user groups. However, in developing proposals for the better integration of passenger transport services in rural Mid Wales, TraCC must seek to manage rather than unnecessarily raise expectations. Proposals must be realistic and affordable and not all interventions will be delivered

by TraCC/ its local authorities – there is a firm responsibility placed upon the Welsh Government (Rail Franchise, TrawsCymru and primary source of grant funding to TraCC/ its local authorities) and on passenger transport operators (quality, reliability and a reasonable level of entrepreneurialship/ financial risk-taking subject to the wishes of their share-holders). The aim is to create a stable and affordable passenger transport system in rural Mid Wales that supports a range of shared economic, social and environmental objectives and outcomes. There are clear opportunities for both the Welsh Government and local/ regional government to use the opportunities presented by the review and re-letting of the Wales and Borders Rail Franchise (from 2018) to significantly improve passenger transport integration and drive-up quality/ standards and improve frequencies to meet forecast demand.

## **TraCC Response to the National Assembly for Wales Inquiry into Integrated Public Transport**

***Question: How can the integration of rail, bus and community transport services in Wales be supported and improved to meet the needs of communities and businesses in both rural and urban Wales?***

The straightforward answer is that the Welsh Government, local authority Regional Transport Consortia (RTC), rail and bus industries, Community Transport (CT) (voluntary) sector all must work more effectively together to plan, fund and deliver an integrated transport system that recognises the differences between urban and rural areas and directs an appropriate level of resource to address these differences.

For rural Mid Wales, there must be recognition that to achieve the shared economic, social and environmental public policy objectives and outcomes, passenger transport services require financial support to provide even a minimum 'safety net' of services. Public (and by association, voluntary) sector budgets are all now under great pressure with additional funding being required from the un-hypothecated local authority Rate Support Grant to off-set declining Government grant funding and to meet public need or expectations. However, the problems of social exclusion and poor access to essential services and opportunities in rural areas remain. Roles and responsibilities of organisations for ensuring that the public can access a range of essential services and opportunities need to be clarified – e.g. non-emergency passenger transport. The current de-regulated environment has been shown to lead to instability in service provision in rural areas, particularly where operators register services on a commercial basis (for various reasons) but soon withdraw the registration dues to the 'un-profitability' of the service. Inevitably, the onus falls on the local authority to 'plug the gap'.

There must be adequate resourcing for transport planning and delivery at a national and regional level:

- TraCC currently receives only 13.7% of available RTP Capital Grant, Local Transport Services (revenue) Grant. For some time TraCC has argued for a review of this arrangements which would better recognise the different needs of rural areas of Wales.
- Current RTP five year programme period comes to an end in 2014/15 and work is already underway (led by the Welsh Government and allied to the Simpson Compact) to identify the planning and funding framework for post 2014/15. Any recommendations arising from this Inquiry will need to influence these discussions.
- The recommendations for implementation of the Bus Funding Review are to be implemented from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2013 and there are RTC resource implications, as well as challenges to better link forward planning and available budgets with existing resource and a review of existing

services. There will also be raised public expectations, concerns and political implications for local Members to manage.

Key areas of concern that currently threaten better passenger transport integration include:

- Declining regional and local authority revenue budgets required to support the operation of socially-necessary services in rural areas of Wales;
- Limited capacity of local authority passenger transport units – need to review, define and achieve a balance between resourcing statutory duties (e.g. Home to School transport) and wider passenger transport role (e.g. marketing/ promoting services, supporting improved non-website based passenger transport information (standards, quality and availability) and support and direction for Community Transport Development Officer posts (currently located in the voluntary sector);
- The relationship between the roles and responsibilities associated with the Welsh Government's National Transport Plan and RTC Regional Transport Plans – particularly in terms of respective roles and responsibilities for developing, planning, funding and managing delivery of rail schemes;
- RTC ability to influence future capital projects (e.g. Trunk Road improvement schemes that will benefit road-based passenger transport and National Stations Improvement programme and investment in new stations) and future revenue projects - e.g. Wales and Borders Rail Franchise, TrawsCymru and improved passenger service frequencies;
- Lack of agreed and implemented standards for the provision of passenger transport information – particularly for local bus services, at the road-side stops and shelters at bus stations and in rural locations. This includes resourcing the inspection and maintenance regime; and
- Passenger transport currently operates in a de-regulated market environment (particularly the bus industry) and this serves as a barrier for local authorities (and Welsh Government) to encourage operators to work in a more integrated way. Even in areas like Mid Wales where very few services are commercial, there is a need to review legislation.

Community transport often fulfils a valuable role in rural integrated transport systems and has always been recognised as such in Mid Wales. However, the voluntary sector operates with constraints (ability to register routes alongside more 'conventional bus service operators, resources and financial sustainability of schemes).

For much of Mid Wales, the introduction of the long sought-after hourly passenger service on the Cambrian Main Line between Aberystwyth and Shrewsbury would make the biggest single contribution to better integration of passenger transport services, offering greater opportunities to integrate local and longer bus services at existing and possible future station locations. For many years, TraCC and its local authorities have urged the Welsh Government to introduce the service which is a current NTP commitment. TraCC and the Welsh Government could then look to improve local or TrawsCymru bus access to already-frequent services to/ from stations at Merthyr, Abergavenny, Carmarthen and Hereford.

**Question: How successful are Regional Transport Consortia in supporting the provision of effective, integrated public transport?**

It is important to remember that this is not just a local authority/ RTC responsibility and that there is a key central role for the Welsh Government in terms of leadership and as primary source of grant funding to local authorities/ RTC for devolved areas of responsibility. There is also a role for the private and voluntary sectors as service providers and for either commercial or not for profit operations. Therefore, it can only be claimed that RTC are successful as far as their current remit allows – only a very limited amount of RTP Capital Grant has been made available thus far to

enable RTC to improve passenger transport infrastructure. There are currently very limited opportunities to influence decisions of the Rail Industry.

In response to the Simpson Review and emerging Compact, last year Ceredigion and Powys county councils chose to merge its existing two units to create a single Passenger Transport Coordination Unit managed by one interim joint manager. In many ways this anticipated the outcomes of the Bus Funding Review that would require joint working to administer grant funding to be provided through the RTC. This new arrangement provides a more formal basis for working together to ensure better integration across at least two local authorities. At present, Gwynedd Council has chosen to continue to work as before but alongside the new Ceredigion/ Powys arrangement.

Following the implementation of the recommendations of the Bus Funding Review, it will be even more critical that sufficient Revenue funding is provided to support local bus services. RTC must also seek to respond to the Review by ensuring that sufficient management and administrative resources are directed towards this new regional role. Much firmer links between transport planning and delivery will be required. The key challenge will be to manage the impact of the significant budget reductions.

The current RTP Five Year Programme comes to an end in 2014/15 and it is essential that a new and improved arrangement at regional and national level is implemented in good time. It is understood that RTC are to be engaged in this work as a work-stream arising from the Simpson Compact. There may also concerns that the current working arrangements which have enabled RTC to be developed and entered into are not secure or enshrined in any formal national arrangements, despite the 'gravitation' towards RTC of additional duties and responsibilities.

There is a need for the Welsh Government to change how it funds various local authority/ RTC transport activities, reviewing annual budgets, providing more indicative budgets for future years and streamlining the various grants and their individual terms and conditions and reporting requirements which currently require a disproportionate level of RTC resource to administer and can divert valuable, scarce resources from project delivery.

The current system of annual budget-setting by the Welsh Government (and associated requirement for annual RTC Delivery Plans) restricts the ability of local government/ RTCs to plan service provision and implement longer-term passenger transport measures. The ability of operators to de-register or change services (with 56 days' notice) can also undermine plans to improve integration and can de-stabilise service networks. As described above, the Rail Industry operates in a different way altogether.

As referred to above, base-line Accessibility Planning was undertaken as part of the development of RTC RTPs (2008/09). As part of the development and implementation of the Welsh Government's Wales Spatial Plan, it was hoped that this valuable work would be taken further by various key partners so as to better plan meet the distinct needs of each Welsh region. Despite the development of local planning authority Local Development Plans (establishing local service centres), unfortunately this is has not happened at a more regional/ national level and we are seeing restructuring of key public services (e.g. health) taking place without due consideration of accessibility and ability to travel to more centrally-located service centres. Redressing this issue should be a primary concern to all.

TraCC has worked closely with Traveline Cymru for many years to promote Traveline services and to deliver a number of local/ regional projects. TraCC has also shared exhibition stands with Traveline at local and national events (e.g. Royal Welsh Show, Aberystwyth Show and eisteddfodau). TraCC sees Traveline Cymru as being the central point in the provision of a range of travel information to the public.

In future, RTC may wish to consider passenger transport operator (private sector) representation on RTC boards as well as reviewing engagement through officer working groups.

The availability of RTC central resource remains a potential barrier to more effective passenger transport service co-ordination and integration (as well as in dispensing other core duties). A small Revenue Grant provided by the Welsh Government supports the employment of a minimum level of RTC staff to support the central coordination and administration the RTC but an effective RTC relies additionally on the availability of local authority staff and Members to engage in regional work programmes and effective governance, decision-making and reporting arrangements. There are clear opportunities associated with the Simpson Compact but also significant budgetary pressures at a local authority level which will have an impact on available staffing resource to support increased work through the RTC.

***Question: How effectively does Welsh Government policy support public transport integration?***

Key current statements of Welsh Government policy that support passenger transport integration include the Wales Transport Strategy (WTS) and National Transport Plan (NTP). RTC RTPs were required to align with the aims and objectives of the WTS (2008) but RTPs preceded the original NTP (March 2010). In addition, the Wales Spatial Plan (2004), Wales Programme for Government (2011) and Wales Infrastructure Investment Plan (2011) support and promote better integration as do more localised shared regeneration plans. However, it would be true to say that in reality (and with little exception), it has been largely left to RTC and individual local authorities to make the links and seek better integration with whatever resources have been placed at their disposal.

Implementation of the changes arising from the Bus Funding Review that will see an enhanced RTC role in the administration and planning of bus service budgets will enable RTC to focus on better integration at a strategic regional level for the first time. However, the immediate concern will be to manage the impact of reduced budgets on current service provision. It is hoped that opportunities will arise to improve value for money and gain efficiencies arising from collaborative working. There are however, practical barriers to delivering well-meaning policies that seek more effective integration as referred to above, some of which arise from the de-regulated environment in which bus services currently operate, very real differences between bus and rail service and infrastructure planning and funding and the relationship between Welsh Government and RTC/ local authorities in planning, demonstrating leadership and in providing sufficient funding for improvements.

Practicalities that need to be overcome by putting policies into practice include adequate provision to access existing waiting facilities (bus stops, improvements to railway stations, car and cycle parking, information).

***Question: In particular, the Welsh Government is considering the establishment of Joint Transport Authorities in Wales, and the feasibility of operating the Wales and Borders rail franchise on a not-for-dividend basis. Additionally, the Minister for Local Government and Communities has indicated that he is considering the use of quality partnerships and contracts in delivery of bus services. How far would these proposals improve integrated public transport provision in Wales?***

It is acknowledged that there is some variation across the four 'Regions' in terms of resources and capacity across the whole highways and transportation function but the fundamental reason being that until the Simpson Compact was adopted, the Transport (Wales) Act 2006 (and subsequent Transport Planning Orders) merely enabled local authorities to voluntarily work together to prepare Regional Transport Plans (in place of Local Transport Plans). Much of the system that is now in place has been 'pioneered' (or evolved) with little Welsh Government strategic vision or guidance, other than a Review of Transport Planning and Delivery undertaken in 2009/10. This is evidenced

by the lack of clarity between national (NTP) and regional/ local (RTP) planning and funding responsibilities but the gradual drift to providing more grant funding through RTC but not necessarily reviewing or streamlining the associated reporting procedures to match the still relatively low level of funds made available to the RTC (and temporary agreement on percentage distribution to each RTC) and the continued threat that (based on crude measures of annual spend against original funding allocation), if the current system is not seen to be working, it can all be taken away again. Until very recently, this has not helped foster a relationship of mutual understanding or trust between the RTC and the Welsh Government. Fortunately the two RTP Annual Progress Reports required to be published to date provide sufficient evidence that RTC are effective planning and delivery bodies and indeed could do more given additional resources.

It is the TraCC local authorities' view is that its local authorities are best placed to understand and deliver a range of highways and transport services and that considerable benefits of working in collaboration have already been identified on a number of initiatives (e.g. Simpson Compact 'Quick Wins') and as far as TraCC is concerned, entered into the current voluntary arrangement as far back as 2003. A robust, yet flexible Legal Agreement has been agreed that clearly defines the TraCC Board role (as delegated to it by the individual local authorities) and sets out associated governance and decision-making arrangements and structures. Ceredigion and Powys county councils have chosen voluntarily to work more closely together with a joint passenger transport unit manager to improve the efficiency and integration of the two units. Ceredigion, Powys and Gwynedd also work together as part of the North and Mid Wales Trunk Road Agent arrangement and Ceredigion and Powys work together as the Central Wales Infrastructure Collaboration (CWIC) on engineering and consultancy services. Whilst acknowledging that there is always room for all organisations to improve, there would be a danger that an imposed Joint Transport Authority would seriously (and unnecessarily) undermine the good work already established in Mid (and other areas of) Wales to which the Welsh Government has been party and the additional cost of establishing JTAs would not be justified as long as the four existing RTC continue to work effectively.

TraCC is supportive of the proposed 'Quality Outcomes' as part of Bus Funding Review. Statutory Quality Bus Contract (SQBCs) or Statutory Quality Bus Partnerships (SQBPs) are seen as being a possible way of protecting public investment in passenger transport (bus) infrastructure and driving-up the quality and reliability of bus services either at a regional/ route level or local network level. The TraCC Board has been asked by the Welsh Government to consider its support for the piloting of SQBPs on the TrawsCymru service network and possibly for the Aberystwyth area. It is understood that whilst the Welsh Government is keen to promote the use of SQBPs/ SQBCs in Wales, it is reliant on individual local authorities to implement them with its support. It is hoped that SQBPs/ SQBCs can make a significant contribution to better integration of local and longer distance bus services (fares and discounts, ticketing, information, marketing, reliability etc) but integration with rail services will remain outside of their scope.

TraCC would support the Welsh Government in exploring the opportunities for creating a replacement rail franchise that is 'not for dividend' but any new franchise needs to allow for growth (development and introduction of new services, acquisition of additional rolling stock and staffing). The franchise should also more closely link the improvement of capital assets (such as railway stations) to the operations (services) – at present, this is disjointed for various historical reasons. Any franchise review should put the people of Wales at the forefront of its considerations and should identify where more commercially-viable (less subsidy) routes can generate revenue for investment (or to balance the books) on services that are dependent on public subsidy. As part of the re-franchising, it will be essential to ensure connections to other UK and European destinations are maintained and improved. TraCC seeks to be involved throughout the re-franchising process to ensure that its published regional passenger transport priorities are supported in any new franchise or management arrangement.

**Question: *What innovative approaches to delivery of public transport in Wales might be considered to improve integration?***

Exploring a much closer (national) relationship between all forms of passenger transport services and infrastructure would be welcomed. Ultimately, there is a need to provide an integrated passenger transport system that offers real travel choices to the population of Wales, recognising urban and rural needs and finding ways to overcome differences.

Policies tend to be in place but practicalities have a habit of getting in the way of delivering real changes (whether considered as 'innovative' or not). Good examples include integrated (multi-modal/ operator) fares and ticketing and the use of Smartcard technology to reduce cash transactions. It was recently announced that we would need to wait until the new Wales and Borders Rail Franchise for the roll-out of smartcard (travel entitlement cards) due to the fundamental differences between how bus and rail services are funded and managed.

Much has been made about Bwcabus project operating in southern Ceredigion and northern Carmarthenshire and there has been considerable investment in the form of local authority staff time and support for funding for vehicles, infrastructure and ICT (Europe, Welsh Government and TraCC). There is now an expectation that the Welsh Government takes the initiative and makes it clear as to how this model is to be rolled-out to other areas of Wales to support emerging RTC Network Strategies/ Plans.

As part of its Bus and Community Transport Network Plan, it is very likely that TraCC will prioritise key routes between key settlements of regional or national significance and local service centres along which to focus investment of public subsidy to support bus services or along which commercially provided services will be encouraged. Some of these core routes will be served by TrawsCymru or rail services and the core network will be supported by locally-provided feeder services connecting at key interchanges or 'hubs'. These feeder services may be provided by community-based transport (often 'not for profit') operators or as demand-responsive or taxi bus services. This is the type of innovation that may work best in rural areas of Wales and may represent the most effective use remaining public money.

Examples from continental Europe demonstrate that much of what we would collectively like to do is actually 'do-able' (and possibly therefore no longer 'innovative'?) and we need to learn from what is happening elsewhere and join-in. Examples of proven (yet under-used) interventions are the use of GPS tracking on vehicles (to support real time information provision and more efficient monitoring and management of services), bus priority lanes and junction signalling that give local bus services the 'competitive edge' over private motor cars in areas of urban traffic congestion

Providing passenger transport is in effect about providing travel choices to reduce reliance on/ use of private motor cars (for a number of social and environmental reasons) and providing a 'safety net' for the 20% of the population who do not have access to a car and would thus be socially (and economically) excluded. It makes complete sense to invest on the basis of public policy but building robust business cases for justifying/ prioritising investment in infrastructure and services can be difficult, especially where budgets are under pressure and there are a number of competing priorities (such as health and social care, education and skills training).

**Question: *How effectively do key stakeholders, particularly transport operators and public bodies, cooperate to ensure effective service delivery?***

There is considerable co-operation between local authorities, transport providers and service users through RTC and this relationship has been well established for a number of years following the development of the first round of RTPs. The recent Bus Funding Review has also brought operators, local authority/ RTC and the Welsh Government together as had development of the Concessionary Fares and Smartcards schemes. Information sharing has traditionally been a casualty of the 'competitive' nature of the de-regulated environment, particularly with regard to sharing and comparing information on patronage levels of both commercial and supported services. This also applies to rail, where much 'confidential' information of value to RTC/ local authorities for transport planning purposes is held by Train Operating Companies. Demand-forecasting (using industry standard models and by talking with operators) is critical to building effective business cases for investment in infrastructure and services.

TraCC/ its local authorities are reasonably certain that relationships are in place in Mid Wales to ensure effective service delivery in a largely rural context. The de-regulated bus operating environment lies at the heart of cooperation between local government, bus operators and the public. The relationship between the DfT, Welsh Government, Network Rail, ORR and TOCs lie at the heart of the issues to do with the rail industry. The ability to work across organisations with different priorities to achieve better integration is thus difficult to achieve without significant change – a change that would need to be led by the Welsh Government.

**Question: *How can the creation of a Network Rail Wales devolved route support effective, integrated public transport in Wales?***

Prior to the changes that brought about devolved Network Rail routes, rail planning and scheme sponsorship was controlled out of regional offices in England (with Mid Wales regularly dealing with Manchester and Swindon offices). Having a Wales (and English Borders) devolved route should be an advantage to both the Welsh Government and RTC/ local authorities and provide greater opportunities for better integration of rails services within the UK as a whole and between rail and other forms of passenger transport. A devolved route should bring benefits in terms of better understanding and relating to the issues in Wales and the four regions. However, it is dependent upon a willingness to listen and actively support or promote. For Mid Wales, there is a danger that the focus will continue to be on delivering electrification and enhanced facilities and services on the more populous Southern and Northern main lines (and Valleys in the South). Another danger is that whilst much of the North-South line runs through England, there will not be as much attention given to cross-border operations (particularly to or from Mid Wales) or to services between the West Midlands, London and the North.

To date in Mid Wales, we have yet to see any tangible benefits and indeed, some projects (e.g. station improvements) are continuing to be managed by Network Rail out of its Manchester office.

**Question: *What are the implications of the England and Wales High Level Output Specification and Statement of Funds Available for Control Period 5, published by the UK Government, for the development of integrated rail services in Wales?***

The UK Government's strategy for Control Period 5 is based on four priorities:

- To create an electrified route linking core centres of population and economic activity;
- To increase capacity and accelerate journey times between key UK cities;
- To facilitate commuter travel into major urban areas, helping to expand the effective labour market, an helping people to access a wider range of jobs; and
- To improve railway links to major ports and airports.

There are undoubted benefits to integration of passenger transport services arising from these priorities and the project proposals (mainly in South Wales) associated with delivering these

priorities. However, current proposals offer little for Mid Wales and there is a real need for continued investment, with the Cambrian Main Line designated as a European TEN-T (rail) route. There is a real concern that despite the development by TraCC of a first Mid Wales Rail Strategy with regional rail investment priorities for Mid Wales, opportunities to fund a range of investments in Mid Wales railway lines will be lost in CP5 (2014-19) and possibly in CP6 (2019-24) also. As TraCC has consistently stated to the Welsh Government and Rail Industry, even a relatively modest rail investment programme is unaffordable based on existing levels of grant funding provided to TraCC. It is therefore critical that TraCC is able to influence national spending plans of the Welsh Government and Network Rail (as well as influencing the content of the new of the Wales and Borders Rail Franchise)

The need to maintain and improve cross-border stakeholder relationships is critical to all but one RTC in Wales.

***Question: What examples of good practice in public transport integration can be identified within Wales, more widely within the UK and internationally?***

There are very many good examples, some further afield and many closer to home. So far, however, in Wales we haven't managed to apply and use these examples for various reasons. These reasons may include:

- Limited involvement in pan-UK/ European projects (bench-marking etc);
- Limited staffing resource and breadth of experience of local authority passenger transport unit and transport planning staffing resource and resulting inability to draw on previous experiences and ideas and utilise peer groups and networks
- An emerging divide between what goes on in other areas of UK and in Wales – including dialogue/ cooperation and sharing of ideas between DfT and Welsh Government.

Distinct pockets of good practice do exist across Wales. For example, local authorities individually or through RTC have a proven track record of delivering capital infrastructure to support local bus services (such as new bus stations, shelters, park and ride, acquisition of new accessible vehicles, real time information). The Rail Industry has traditionally been responsible for funding improvements to railway stations, albeit investment has been slow in coming forward and there is a need to improve a very large 'backlog' of stations in poor condition across Wales. Local authorities have begun to see the value in establishing corporate passenger transport units (bringing together education and social services transport functions with the 'highways' passenger transport function) and more recently in looking at opportunities to work on a regional basis to achieve efficiencies of scale.

In Mid Wales, the Bwcabus project has enabled services to be provided six days a week between 07.00 and 19.00 where services were previously limited. The new service offers connections to core service routes at a series of 'hubs' (interchanges) and uses state of the art technology to manage bookings and connections. It is essential that the scheme is fully evaluated (passenger numbers and growth, operational costs, views of users etc) so as to enable the Welsh Government and local authorities to develop similar schemes elsewhere. Mid Wales has also been central to the development the Welsh Government's TrawsCymru network and recent investment in the Aberystwyth Passenger Transport 'Gateway' project has demonstrated the physical ability to bring together buses, rail, taxis, walking and cycling in one central location.

In general however, a much larger step is required to integrate the planning and prioritisation of funding for passenger transport services with land use planning, economic development/ job creation, health and social care provision and the provision of education and skills training. Current opportunities exist at a local level (e.g. through Local Health Boards and community planning and

regeneration initiatives) but there is not yet evidence that a similar change is happening at a national (Welsh Government) level.

There is an opportunity for practitioners working in the field of integrated transport planning and passenger transport service delivery to work more closely together through professional bodies (such as ATCO) and with representatives of public transport operating companies and the travelling public to begin to establish consistent standards of quality and establish networks for the exchange of ideas and best practice. There is an opportunity for the Welsh Government to better engage in this process.

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## **SWITCH Response to NAFW Enterprise & Business committee Inquiry into Public Transport Integration – November 2012**

Inquiry into  
Integrated  
Public Transport

### Background

The South West Wales Integrated Transport Consortium (SWWITCH) comprises the four Local Councils in South West Wales working together to plan, develop and deliver improved transport and access to:

- support the local and regional economy
- to enhance social inclusion and
- to protect and improve the environment

SWWITCH was set up in 1998 and has evolved over the years since to meet changing demands. It is organised as formal Joint Committee and operates by a legal agreement.

### Introduction

SWWITCH welcomes the opportunity to respond to the Committee's Inquiry into public transport integration "Progress in Partnership" the SWWITCH Regional Transport Plan (2010 – 2015), which was developed with extensive stakeholder engagement, stresses the importance of integration within and between public transport modes as a key determinant to the attractiveness and thus use of public transport and other sustainable and healthy modes. The Regional Transport Plan can be viewed on the SWWITCH website at [www.swwitch.net](http://www.swwitch.net)

In the current financially challenging circumstances, the need for improved integration, to maximise the effectiveness and utilisation of private and public sector investment in public transport, is critical. There is even more need for planners, funders and operators of public transport to ensure that their efforts are focused on providing the best quality, best penetration and best frequency services to encourage new users and to provide access for those who rely on public transport for work, education and training, health needs and for social and leisure purposes.

SWWITCH has not answered all the questions posed, but has provided detailed responses to most questions. Should you require any clarification on any points raised please contact SWWITCH for more details. SWWITCH has also accepted (subject to Member endorsement) the invitation to appear before the Committee (alongside other transport consortia) in January 2013.

### SWWITCH Response

*Question 1 - How can the integration of rail, bus and community transport services in Wales be supported and improved to meet the needs of communities and businesses in both rural and urban Wales?*

- Improved integration within Welsh Government teams within the Integrated Transport Unit to ensure the improved alignment of policies, budgets and resources
- The provision of longer term (that is at least three years), consistent revenue support for bus and community transport services, whether this is through Consortia, local Councils or to the Community Transport Association. This supports longer term planning and capital investment by the private and public sector to enhance the public transport "offer". It will also enable more investment in marketing and awareness to encourage new users. Budget cuts which focus on less well patronised services impact on key links between and within settlements and adversely impact on rural communities.

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### Evidence from SWITCH

- Improved linkages with planning and economic regeneration processes – accessibility mapping as critical part of planning process, especially for health services and facilities
- An examination of the costs/practicalities of alternatives delivery mechanisms for rail and bus in Wales, including network franchising and not for profit organisations
- Ensure that the new bus funding regime’s quality scoring mechanism includes recognition of elements which support integration
- Improved linkages with and co-operation from Network Rails and Train Operating Companies in respect of integrated transport and regeneration
- Development of Wales “integrated ticket” which allows users to transfer between modes and providers with ease and without incurring financial penalties
- Use of Traveline Cymru to improve access to fares and ticketing information to facilitate journey planning

### *Question 2 - How successful are Regional Transport Consortia in supporting the provision of effective, integrated public transport?*

- The Consortia work closely with their constituent Local Councils (LCs) to prioritise capital investment to support and develop public transport, through bus corridor enhancements; interchange development and other specific projects such as Swansea Metro, Bwcabus, and Western Valleys Community Transport project. However, Local Councils/Consortia have limited revenue funding streams to support mainstream or community transport services and even less to carry out the investigations/background research/ practical activities likely to support improved integration. Local Councils /Consortia also have limited control over commercial public transport services
- Regional Transport Plans prepared by all Consortia, set out Public Transport Strategies/policies and information strategies. However, with limited revenue budgets and very few staff the actual delivery remains with individual LCs, each of whom has different priorities and different drivers relative to the topography and demography of their urban and rural areas. LCs have developed Public Transport teams with the knowledge and skills and in many cases integrated teams already work to secure maximum efficiency from public and school transport networks
- RTP Committees/Boards do have Public Transport representatives and users involved and so could be a useful vehicle for sharing plans and trying to co-ordinate/integrate better. However, the commercial sensitivity of some information and the public nature of these meetings means that most information is carefully worded or shared only when plans are complete

### *Question 3 - How effectively does Welsh Government policy support public transport integration?*

- Not very effectively, the Wales Transport Strategy and National Transport Plan make references to the importance of integration but there are few practical examples of this emerging to date. Cuts to funding act against integration where vulnerable, under utilised but connecting services may be lost. To be fair the WG like LCs and Consortia have limited control over the private operators who remain

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free to change/withdraw/introduce services with limited notice. The legislative framework based around competition and the “benefits” therein militate against integration and has a real price tag for the public sector. There is legislation in place which allows for Quality partnerships and Quality Contracts to be implemented. However, the timescales and costs involved in setting up and running these (and especially being able to guarantee ongoing revenue support streams) is off-putting

- There are some good examples of WG support for integration and one such in SWITCH is Bwcabus. This service has secured integrated ticketing and inter-availability of tickets with guaranteed connections for passengers between Demand Responsive services and the core corridor service between Carmarthen and Cardigan
- Additionally policy support does not translate into investment decisions at WG level, for example the Wales Infrastructure Investment Plan, Despite the Plan giving priority to economic (jobs and growth) over social infrastructure, the reality is that c £100m of the “additional £175m to support additional investment priorities in the Wales Infrastructure Investment Plan” is being spent on social infrastructure. This importance of this is clear, but what investment will the Plan make into transport improvements, ports and airports that will help to drive economic recovery

*Question 4 - In particular, the Welsh Government is considering the establishment of Joint Transport Authorities in Wales, and the feasibility of operating the Wales and Borders rail franchise on a not-for-dividend basis. Additionally, the Minister for Local Government and Communities has indicated that he is considering the use of quality partnerships and contracts in delivery of bus services. How far would these proposals improve integrated public transport provision in Wales?*

- Setting up JTAs of themselves will not guarantee any better integration. They are simply an additional tier of public sector (when some might argue there are too many tiers already!). A JTA without full highways powers will be of limited use and without links to travel generating activities (health/education etc) will create another tier of “dis” integration rather than help. Setting up JTAs will cost a lot of money and take away local democratic accountability and in the main buses serve local markets and communities
- Wales and Borders franchise as a not for profit organisation – seems worth looking into and with 5 years to go until the new franchise is due to be let - now is a good time to consider this in terms of why/what/who and how before any decisions are made
- Quality contracts and partnerships – these are not the simple panaceas to all the issues created by privatisation and de-regulation. Quality partnerships can be very valuable provided everyone has something to gain and is able to commit to a medium terms level of service/funding etc. They however, will not create instant integration as they tend to focus on a clear/distinct set of services/corridor. Quality Partnerships are route/service specific usually linked to the provision of new infrastructure where access is restricted on the basis of vehicle/ service quality. These can improve standards but not necessarily improve integration with other transport modes. Quality contracts are very expensive to deliver and politically difficult. Effectively they are franchise agreements where the whole network is

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## Evidence from SWITCH

awarded to one operator or subdivided into smaller sections where there is exclusive operation by an operator in that area. They can create integration because the local authority specifies the timetable and can include connections between modes. Fares can also be specified. The lead in time for set up is lengthy and costs are high. The Competition Committee in 2011 estimated set up costs at £1m with similar annual running costs. LAs would need to commit to funding these at a given level for up to 10 years. This is not feasible in the current or proposed funding regimes

- All of the proposals under consideration may do something to help integration, but ultimately the problem is in areas where competition exists we are trying to make commercial organisations which are competing with each other to work together – to provide exactly the same product for the same price and share information on each others product. There is a need to convince public transport operators that the competition is the car or technology and not other operators. In those areas where there is limited competition and most services are subsidised integration is easier practically to achieve, but comes at a price. In current declining budgets it may be that integration will be sacrificed to maintain base levels of public transport to communities

*Question 5 - What innovative approaches to delivery of public transport in Wales might be considered to improve integration?*

- Wales Travel card, an All Wales Smart multi modal card
- Franchising
- Further development of schemes like Plus Bus
- All Wales Real Time information system linking buses, trains and Community /Demand Responsive Transport
- Further integration of walking and cycling facilities within and between key communities and to/form public transport interchanges
- Further development and integration with Park and share sites along key corridors to encourage modal shift
- Innovative DRT services, (exploiting technology for scheduling effectively) for rural areas to support core strategic bus corridors.
- Better and Smarter targeted marketing of services
- Whole journey integration (single ticket, coordinated timetable etc)
- Improved access to temporary storage of baggage/goods (such as shopping) to remove barriers to public transport use
- Further development of Traveline system to include
- ❖ A more detailed process for verifying timetable and route information before posting on the Traveline website. This will increase user confidence in the information provided
- ❖ A system that would allow the production/printing of standardised timetable information (eg. bus stop displays, timetable leaflet etc) directly from Traveline website for LA users as well as the general public

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Evidence from SWITCH

*Question 6 - How effectively do key stakeholders, particularly transport operators and public bodies, cooperate to ensure effective service delivery?*

- Within context of current legislative and funding constraints groups try very hard to integrate and deliver effective services by working with a range of local and national operators. However different LAs have different priorities which can change along with the Council Administrations. It is also difficult to commit to long term strategies when funding from year to year is uncertain. There is partnership working with some of the larger bus operators but there is often reticence in sharing patronage information as they are in a competitive market
- Much more needs to be done to ensure public transport services operate with minimum delays and to encourage new, smaller entrants into markets
- Further progress could be made to enhance service delivery and integration of non emergency patient transport with other public transport/demand responsive services
- There is a recognised need to improve co-operation and integration with train operators and Network Rail and this process should be assisted through the devolution of some responsibility to a Wales Network rail division

*Question 7 - How can the creation of a Network Rail Wales devolved route support effective, integrated public transport in Wales?*

- If it will truly allow devolved decision making it could help to make sure that rail/bus integration is smoother, for example early decisions on station access enhancements and ticketing inter-availability. Better sharing of plans and proposals at an early stage to allow real engagement. If timetables for rail services are available well in advance then connections with other modes can be maintained or planned
- There is recent evidence that with the devolution of some responsibilities to Wales Network Rail is becoming more effective at the local level by engaging with LCs on improvement projects. This will help to militate against previous experiences where Network Rail appeared to be an insular, national UK conglomerate organisation

*Question 9 - What examples of good practice in public transport integration can be identified within Wales, more widely within the UK and internationally?*

- Traveline Cymru
- All Wales Rail/Bus maps
- Traws Cymru services
- Bwcabus services
- Concessionary fares
- Major interchange improvements – Swansea City Bus Station (where coaches, Buses/taxis/P&R/ft are all easily accessible)



**Sewta response to the**

**National Assembly of Wales**  
**Enterprise & Business Committee**

**Inquiry into Integrated Public Transport**

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## **1. Introduction**

1.1 The South East Wales Transport Alliance (Sewta) is a joint committee of ten local authorities in the region; Blaenau Gwent, Bridgend, Caerphilly, Cardiff, Merthyr Tydfil, Monmouthshire, Newport, Rhondda Cynon Taf, Torfaen and the Vale of Glamorgan. Sewta is charged with preparing and co-ordinating regional transport policies, plans and programmes on behalf of its constituent councils, including the statutory South East Wales Regional Transport Plan (RTP). We work with industry partners and the Welsh Government to improve regional transport in south-east Wales. We are the largest of the four transport consortia in Wales and are pleased to present evidence on the Committee's interest in integrated public transport.

1.2 Sewta welcomes the committee's inquiry into integrated public transport. We believe that the rather limited amount of integration within the public transport system of South East Wales is one of the most important problems of the transport system and needs to be tackled comprehensively to provide the accessibility, connectivity and mobility to grow the economy, improve social inclusion and protect the environment.

1.3 In addressing the committee's inquiry, Sewta believes it is essential that we begin with a scrutiny of what public transport integration means and could mean for South East Wales and Wales as a whole. These will be addressed in the following sections. The final part will focus on further comments and conclusions.

1.4 Public transport integration is also core to the Metro vision. Sewta has embraced the Metro concept within a broader Sewta Metro Plus proposition, and is currently undertaking a study to develop further a portfolio of integrated regional development transport proposals for the forthcoming update of the South East Wales Regional Transport Plan.

1.5 This study will report later this year. However, a number of organisational, financial and legal issues will need to be addressed to enable successfully integrated public transport systems. These are addressed in Section 2. Sections 3-7 then set out the key features of a properly integrated public transport system, and for each issue the current situation and the necessary improvements. Another, equally important issue is integration at planning level, which is addressed in Section 8.

## **2. Support for integrated public transport policies**

2.1 Sections 2-7 set out the key factors needed for a successfully integrated public transport system. The key factors that limit successful integration can be summarised in three categories, organisational, financial and legal.

- **Organisational**

Any integrated regional public transport system in Europe, has at its heart a regional public authority that is responsible for planning and implementing the system. Since its foundation, Sewta has provided a forum for collaboration on public transport integration between local authorities, the Welsh Government, users' representatives and transport operators, through the Sewta Board and supporting technical working groups.

Sewta has made clear<sup>1</sup> that additional powers and resources would be needed at the regional level to deliver a more ambitious integrated transport programme. The report further notes that governance arrangements that would facilitate public transport integration are vital, and need to include integration with land use planning, economic development and regeneration.

Sewta believes such changes to organisational and governance arrangements are best built on those already in place. In particular the Sewta Board, as a statutory joint committee, can provide both the regional leadership and local accountability to take on the role of the required regional public authority.

Sewta is a partner in the Minister for Local Government and Communities' South East Wales Integrated Transport Task Force. This is currently preparing recommendations for governance arrangements which will drive the implementation of a shared vision of bringing about a truly integrated transport system for the region.

- **Financial**

The current financial arrangements and levels of funding for public transport in the region are not conducive to delivering effective public transport integration. In terms of capital investment, steady and dependable funding is required to deliver the full Sewta Metro Plus proposals, including a reliable funding commitment that looks beyond current funding horizons of only one year at a time.

The development of integrated ticketing will require funding, including funding for the set up, as well as start-up financing for the first couple of years while the system beds down.

The current proposals to regionalise support for bus services, together with the requirement to develop regional bus network strategies, are a step in the right direction. However the simultaneous reduction of funding by 25% is a major concern, that will severely undermine the associated good work that is emerging from the Bus Funding Review, as well as Sewta's ability to improve integration.

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<sup>1</sup> Sewta Board report: "A Metro for Wales's Capital City Region – Sewta Metro Plus" agreed March 2012,

It should be noted that developing properly integrated public transport would transform the value for money of public transport investment. For example, delivery of electrification could deliver higher benefits if integrated with other transport systems, such as key interchanges in accordance with the Sewta Metro Plus principles.

- Legal factors

Despite the changes made by the Transport Act 2000 and the Transport (Wales) Act 2006, bus services in provincial Britain are still effectively governed by the 1985 Transport Act, with its emphasis on competition rather than co-ordination. As a consequence, and in contrast to arrangements for London, there are severe limits on what public authorities and bus operators can do to integrate services and fares. Local authorities are reluctant to take the lead, as their primary role is defined as reactive, leaving the commercial network to its own, and procuring only those socially-necessary services that would otherwise not operate.

As stated, Sewta supports the introduction of a more efficient and effective bus regulatory system. Sewta does not believe that the Quality Bus Contracts which could be implemented under current legislation would solve the issues described above. We would like to work with the Welsh Government on a thorough analysis of the current system, and on developing proposals (including those for legislative change) that enable and facilitate integration instead of hindering it, and most importantly, that put passengers first.

### **3. Integrated public transport**

3.1 As set out in our Regional Transport Plan, Sewta considers the limited amount of integration in the public transport network as a key barrier that needs to be addressed<sup>2</sup>. We believe the region needs a *modern, accessible, integrated and sustainable transport system*<sup>3</sup> that helps to develop the economy, promote social inclusion and equality, and protects the environment<sup>4</sup>.

3.2 There are many good public transport services in the region (although examples of bad practice can be found too). However too many of the good facilities and services are less successful than they should be because they are not fully part of a properly integrated public transport system. While there are many improvements that can be made to the public transport system, our response will, as per the terms of references for this inquiry, concentrate on the key features required for such a properly integrated public transport system. We believe successful action on these features could bring about substantial benefits, not just because of their own value, but because they enable all other parts of the public transport system, and any future improvements to it, to work much better.

3.3 The ability to offer fully integrated public transport will support wider Welsh Government objectives and policies, such as active travel and sustainable tourism. Sewta recently commissioned a study to examine the role of sustainable transport in tourism<sup>5</sup>. The findings of this report highlight a number of issues where a lack of integration provides a barrier to the use of more sustainable modes, such as information and ticketing.

3.4 The four key features of a properly integrated public transport system are:

- Fully integrated ticketing
- Appropriate timetable coordination
- High-quality interchanges
- Integrated public transport information

3.5 A fifth, equally important issue is integration at planning level. Each of which we will discuss in more detail below.

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<sup>2</sup>South East Wales Regional Transport Plan, section 4.3.3

<sup>3</sup> South East Wales Regional Transport Plan Vision, section 3.1

<sup>4</sup> South East Wales Regional Transport Plan Wider Goals, section 3.2

<sup>5</sup> Sustainable Transport in Tourism, July 2012

## **4. Fully integrated ticketing**

### **Background**

4.1 Improved ticketing arrangements are a key component of integration between services and between public transport modes. A single integrated ticketing system, and more easily understood ticketing arrangements, reduce barriers to the use of public transport and improve transfers between connections. This enables more seamless travel, and brings benefits in terms of affordability, convenience and time-saving for both existing and potential future passengers. Provision of integrated ticketing, facilitated by widespread use of smartcards, is an important part of Sewta's proposals for achieving transport integration.

4.2 This is supported by the findings of a study undertaken on behalf of the Passenger Transport Executive Group (PTEG) into the benefits of simple and unified ticketing structures, which found that the introduction of such systems can lead to substantial patronage growth in the range of 6% to 20%, with some modes experiencing increases of the order of 40%. Examples include a patronage increase of up by 12% in the two years following the introduction of zonal and integrated ticketing in Zürich, and annual average growth of 7.5% a year in patronage since the simplification and integration of public transport fares in Freiburg (Germany). In London it is estimated that a third of the increased use of public transport since 1999/2000 can be attributed to Oyster and other ticketing simplifications.

4.3 In addition to patronage increases, the study found benefits in terms of increases in recorded passenger satisfaction, evidence of resulting modal shift, increases in revenue, reductions in transaction and administrative costs, social benefits, reductions in fraud, wider contributions to city life and identity, acquisition of accurate data on passenger travel behaviour enabling better capacity and network planning, and faster boarding times enabling buses to run faster, and more reliably and frequently<sup>6</sup>.

4.4 The Sewta Metro Plus study is also looking into integrated ticketing, the purpose of which is "to create a single system for users, enabling users to make the best journey irrespective of operator or transport mode." It's seen as essential to a unified Metro network, and it is acknowledged that integrated ticketing is not the same as a Smartcard or electronic purse (see below).

4.5 Sewta believes that to be effective, integrated ticketing must have the form of a simple, single integrated ticketing system, similar to London or the German *Verkehrsverbünde*. It must be a single system, with a full range of tickets, valid on all public transport services without exception, at a fare level similar to current single-operator tickets. The introduction of a limited range of highly or premium-priced through-tickets with a restricted validity, limited use, limited purchasing opportunities, which are difficult to publicise, will not deliver integrated ticketing or integrated public transport.

4.6 Businesses as well would benefit from improved public transport integration. An integrated ticketing system would allow the development of job tickets<sup>7</sup> through reduced demand for parking, reduction of business travel costs and a wider labour market.

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<sup>6</sup> The Benefits of Simplified and Integrated Ticketing in Public Transport, Passenger Transport Executive Group, October 2009. [www.pteg.net/NR/rdonlyres/EACFCEE0-F212-467F-B342-2B9B9538DEED/0/integratedticketingreport221009.pdf](http://www.pteg.net/NR/rdonlyres/EACFCEE0-F212-467F-B342-2B9B9538DEED/0/integratedticketingreport221009.pdf)

<sup>7</sup> Job tickets are monthly or annual all-operator all-mode season tickets, purchased en block from a regional transport authority by employers for use by their staff. These are typically bulk purchased at a large discount on the price of





## Current state of integrated ticketing

4.7 In South East Wales every bus operator has its own ticketing system and fare structure. Some of these are fairly simple. For example Cardiff Bus and Newport Bus effectively use a flat fare system within the respective city limits, but others are less simple for users to understand. The local rail system has its own separate (mostly zonal) fares system. There are also numerous limited multi-bus operator and multi-modal tickets, add-ons and examples of through-ticketing. There are one-day and weekly bus network riders<sup>8</sup>, PlusBus rail & bus tickets, Caerphilly, Rhondda and Aberdare bus plus rail tickets, RailLink bus services, further rail and bus rover, ranger, explorer and flexi-passes, as well as numerous local agreements where one operator accepts tickets (e.g. return tickets) issued by other operators (especially where evening services are provided under contract by a different operator).

4.8 Because of competition issues, the vast majority of these operate as through-tickets (where the 2<sup>nd</sup> operator simply accepts the tickets of the first operator without financial compensation) or add-ons (where the 2<sup>nd</sup> operator receives a set additional amount that is added to an existing ticket by the 1<sup>st</sup> operator). There are no multi-operator travel cards, where revenue is shared by passenger journeys or passenger miles.

4.9 There is currently no day, weekly or longer season ticket that is valid on all bus and rail operators in south east Wales. For most trips involving more than one operator (whether bus-bus or bus-rail), it is not possible to purchase a single through ticket. However, where they exist, they are typically more expensive than the fare for an equivalent journey of the same distance with a single operator. In summary, existing commercial through-ticketing / integrated ticketing arrangements are limited, and can be confusing and expensive.

4.10 The principal example of integrated bus ticketing in Wales is provided through the All Wales Concessionary Fare scheme, which enables eligible users to use any local bus service. This is however a fully supported scheme, which bypasses the competition or commercial risk elements associated with commercial operations.

## Delivering fully integrated ticketing

4.11 Sewta supports a single integrated ticketing system for the regional public transport network<sup>9</sup> and is planning to develop proposals for integrated ticketing across the region. Through the Welsh National Transport Plan (NTP), the Welsh Government has made a commitment to introduce a Welsh Transport Entitlement Card for bus and rail services ('Go Cymru'). According to the NTP, this "would include integrated ticketing, to allow 'seamless' transfer between services and operators, by 2014". It is currently being developed as an e-purse, which will facilitate cashless purchase, rather than offer an integrated ticket, and for buses only. A pilot scheme, which is centred on Newport and valid on Newport Bus and Cardiff Bus, is currently under way<sup>10</sup>.

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<sup>8</sup> although eligibility between operators varies on daily and weekly products, limiting their usefulness and increasing complexity

<sup>9</sup> See Sewta Regional Transport Plan Policy IIP1

<sup>10</sup> In Sewta, Cardiff Bus and Newport Bus have also introduced commercial smart ticket products (marketed as the Iff Card and Freedom Card respectively), but these are restricted to their own networks of services, currently offer no discounts and are effectively an e-purse.

4.12 There are however a number challenges to introducing fully integrated ticketing. Firstly, a fares and ticketing system would need to be developed, identifying available tickets, ticketing structure, fare zones / stages, fares levels, central processing, revenue distribution / reimbursement mechanism, sales / purchase mechanisms, management costs, etc<sup>11</sup>. Any such scheme would need to be planned carefully, so as to not fall foul of competition legislation, and to take account of conditions that apply to public transport ticketing schemes. Consultation with operators and the competition commission would be essential. These tasks have some resource implications, and whilst Sewta aims to take these issues forward, it has had no funding for the development or implementation of non-capital interventions since 2010.

4.13 A further issue is to ensure universal acceptance at a fare similar to current single operator fares. Concerning bus services, there may be an opportunity to make membership of such a scheme a condition of payments under the Regional Transport Services Grant, the proposed successor to Local Transport Services (LTSG) and the Bus Services Operating Grant (BSOG – the old fuel duty rebate). These are likely to be rerouted via the Regional Transport Consortia from April 2013. However, whilst this provides an opportunity to instigate change, it is unfortunate that grant levels are at the same time being reduced by 25%, which is expected to lead to substantial upheaval in terms of fares increases, deregistration by bus operators and fewer council-supported services. It is therefore difficult to see how a new integrated ticketing system can be introduced as an additional grant condition for some time, until financial conditions improve and a more proactive funding regime is in place, that can be used to encourage and pump prime such initiatives. Concerning rail services, it would be absolutely essential that membership of the scheme is a condition of the next Wales rail franchise, and other rail franchises operating into Wales.

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<sup>11</sup> An important consideration is the requirement by the Financial Services Authority surrounding multi agency / operator ticketing scheme that holds cash deposited by passengers. This will be addressed by the Welsh Government when the Go Cymru scheme is rolled out nationally, but one barrier for operator participation may be the fees associated with each transaction.

## **5. High-quality interchanges**

### **Background**

5.1 Public transport interchanges provide a central focus and point of integration for public transport services. Changing between bus and rail services is essential to complete many journeys by public transport. However there is an inherent dislike by passengers of the need to change service and/or mode. In particular, the inconvenience that such changes cause compared to a direct journey – known as the ‘interchange penalty’, is a factor that works against the shift from private to public transport.

5.2 The quality and safety of the facilities provided at interchanges is therefore a key influence on the passenger perception of public transport services. It needs to be addressed in order to ensure that the negative impact of the ‘interchange penalty’ is not further exacerbated. From a passenger point of view, interchanges must be designed to reflect the three main activities they may wish to carry out there; that is to move between one service or mode and another, to wait for their next service and to use the time that they spend waiting or transferring to carry out other daily activities (such as buying a coffee or newspaper or using a cash machine). Key elements of seamless interchange include:

- Good feelings of personal security (through staffing, open layout, good lighting), especially outside core hours,
- Provision of accurate, well-placed, easy-to-use signage and information,
- High quality waiting facilities, including protection from the elements, seating, lighting, toilets, ticket purchase and refreshments.
- Good pedestrian access
- Cycle parking facilities

5.3 High quality interchanges are also always public transport hubs, and as such will also help to meet the social, economic and environmental needs of an urban area, including:

- Supporting the continued economic development of the local area and acting as a catalyst for socio-economic and physical regeneration in local communities
- Minimising the need to travel, by concentrating new jobs and homes around accessible locations
- Improving access to facilities and services, and providing links between neighbourhoods and employment, education and other opportunities
- Removing barriers which prevent disabled people and others with reduced mobility from travelling freely and
- Creating more attractive buildings and public spaces, improving personal safety and security, and enhancing the urban realm and creating a 'sense of place'

### **Best practice example: Blackwood Interchange**

Blackwood bus station is a key hub within the regional bus network. A review of the previously existing interchange had identified a number of weaknesses, which contributed to low levels of user satisfaction with facilities and levels of security. A comprehensive redevelopment of the facility was undertaken, which included major revisions to the layout and the replacement of the existing open waiting area with a high quality station building, including CCTV, enhanced information, toilets and refreshment facilities.

Passenger surveys were undertaken before and after completion of the scheme to identify

the impact on user perception. Respondents were asked to rate key attributes on a 5 point Likert Scale. These were collated and a rating calculated, ranging from -1 (very bad) to +1 (Very Good). A rating of 0 indicating a neutral perception. The results are illustrated below:

Attribute	Sample Size	Satisfaction before	Satisfaction after	Change
Pedestrian Access to/from the station	506	0.39	0.61	+0.22
Integration with other modes	233	0.32	0.45	+0.13
Connections to train station	190	0.36	0.55	+0.19
Waiting areas	494	-0.04	0.69	+0.73
Refreshment facilities	294	0.23	0.88	+0.65
Toilet facilities	301	-0.03	0.60	+0.63
Timetable Information	465	0.18	0.61	+0.43
Safety and Security	466	0.03	0.53	+0.50
Access on/off boarding platform	495	0.41	0.57	+0.16

It was evident the completion of this scheme has resulted in a significant increase in user perception. Since completion, there has also been significant commercial investment in the local bus fleet in terms of quality and frequency. This illustrates the increased confidence in the operator to grow the market, and the ability of publically funded improvements to act as a catalyst for further private investment.





The new interchange also won the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors Wales Regeneration Award in 2008.

### Current state of interchanges

5.4 In South East Wales, the current picture is very mixed. There are 18 bus stations<sup>12</sup> in the region ranging from recently rebuilt / modernised ones (e.g. Bridgend, Blackwood) to bus stations in need of investment (Cardiff, Merthyr Tydfil). There are also numerous other key interchange points (e.g. rail stations with nearby bus services, major crossroads).

5.5 Since 2010, Sewta has invested about £2.7m in upgrading interchanges. This figure, which excludes park and ride facilities, represents 11% of its total available RTP grant. This figure (and the proportion of total funding) is likely to increase substantially over the next couple of years as major works are planned for Cardiff, Newport, Brynmawr, Merthyr, Abergavenny, Severn Tunnel Junction, Chepstow and other locations. Sewta has also developed an Interchange Best Practice Audit, which sets the standards that Sewta believes is required for interchanges in the region, and has prepared a Bus/Rail Integration Study that focuses on strategic opportunities for improved physical interchange.

### Delivering high-quality interchanges

5.6 Sewta supports further improvements and expansion of public transport interchanges facilities. It is likely that in the next few years, we will spend a substantial proportion of our capital funding on interchange projects. The National Transport Plan (NTP) also commits

<sup>12</sup> Aberdare, Abergavenny, Bargoed, Blackwood, Bridgend, Brynmawr Caerphilly, Cardiff, Chepstow, Cwmbran, Ebbw Vale, Merthyr Tydfil, Monmouth, Newport, Pontypridd, Talbot Green, Tonypandy, Tredgar

the Welsh Government to “Create a series of strategic modal interchanges (by 2014)”<sup>13</sup>  
This commitment was highlighted in the reprioritisation of the NTP in summer 2011.

5.7 The key issue with delivering high-quality interchanges is funding. Overall capital funding for regional/local transport schemes has fallen by 79% compared to the 2004/09 average, and is now running at less than 33% of even the do minimum set out in the South East Wales Regional Transport Plan. As a consequence, it will not be possible to deliver many of the schemes proposed.

5.8 Sewta also believes that, given the Welsh Government’s commitment to deliver strategic modal interchanges by 2014, and the fact that both Cardiff and Newport are identified as ‘Key Settlements of National Significance’ in the Wales Spatial Plan<sup>14</sup>, the delivery of high quality transport interchanges in these two places should be identified in and funded through the Welsh Government’s National Transport Plan programme.

5.9 Another key issue is integration of interchanges in regeneration schemes. As we said in our response to the Assembly’s Enterprise & Learning Committee 2011 Inquiry into the Regeneration of Town Centres, it is essential that key interchanges must be identified in all city and town centres as a priority, and that good quality interchange facilities should be required as core components of all regeneration / redevelopment schemes, and not as an afterthought. There is a danger that transport facilities are overlooked on such schemes, especially if there is no pressure from the funding bodies or policy frameworks that these facilities have to be provided. It would be good if the NTP could flag up city and town centres as a priority for improving interchange, and provide additional transport funding, to ensure good quality interchange facilities are provided at the same time as regeneration. Indeed it would have been helpful if intervention 7 of the NTP (‘Create a series of strategic modal interchanges by 2014’), could be taken forward, and supported by a list of sites to be (re-)developed or further information on the location of proposed strategic modal interchanges.

5.10 Interchange development is also taken forward as part of the development of the Sewta Metro Plus proposals, which looks at co-location of interchange facilities.

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<sup>13</sup> National Transport Plan intervention 7, NTP page 3

<sup>14</sup> Wales Spatial Plan 2008 Update, The National Vision, page 28

## 6. Timetable coordination

### Background

6.1 At the most basic level, passenger transport integration means that the routes of bus services should be planned in such a way that they call at local stations and meet other bus routes, and that their timetables are set so that passengers can interchange between rail and bus or bus and bus without lengthy waiting times. Public transport integration utterly relies on timetable coordination to function. In practice, this means all services should be planned as a network, trunk services first<sup>15</sup>, with more local services taking account of the area served and the timetables, and planned accordingly.

6.2 This is the method used in networks commonly seen as highly integrated, such as London, or most continental European cities. The 1985 Transport Act, the current legislative framework for provincial Britain, on the other hand, does not prioritise timetable co-ordination in any way, replacing it with a more consultative approach.

6.3 Despite the development of Quality Bus Contracts and statutory Quality Bus Partnership schemes, UK competition policy is still seen as a key deterrent to inter-operator co-ordination of timetabling (and ticketing)<sup>16</sup>. The 2010-2012 Competition Commission market inquiry into Local Bus Services also chose to take a strong line on promoting bus-on-bus competition rather than supporting passengers' clear preference for integrated urban public transport. Sewta's evidence to the Competition Commission, having experienced some of the most damaging bus wars in the late 1980's and early 1990's, was based on the need to deliver co-ordinated competition through voluntary partnership arrangements.

### Best practice example – Rail-link bus services:

There are a number of dedicated, fast and convenient rail-link bus services in South East Wales, connecting settlements without rail access to the nearest stations. These have timetables fully integrated with the train services. Unfortunately they require a high degree of subsidy, cannot be used for local (bus-only) trips, and often parallel existing bus routes. A number of rail-bus links have been discontinued over the last few years for financial reasons.

	to Cardiff...														i Gaerdydd...														
	Blackwood interchange (stand 4)	0620	0650	0745	0900	1000	1100	1200	1300	1400	1500	1600	1700	1800	1940	Coed Duon cyfnewidfa (cilfach 4)	1950	1955	1955	1955	1955	1955	1955	1955	1955	1955	1955	1955	
	Bryn Derw	0624	0654	0750	0905	1005	1105	1205	1305	1405	1505	1605	1705	1805	1945	Bryn Derw	1950	1955	1955	1955	1955	1955	1955	1955	1955	1955	1955	1955	1955
	Pontllanfraith council offices	0628	0658	0755	0910	1010	1110	1210	1310	1410	1510	1610	1710	1810	1950	Pontllan-fraith swyddfeydd y cyngor	1950	1955	1955	1955	1955	1955	1955	1955	1955	1955	1955	1955	1955
	Maescwmmr shops	0632	0702	0800	0915	1015	1115	1215	1315	1415	1515	1615	1715	1815	1955	Maes-y-cwmwr siopau	1950	1955	1955	1955	1955	1955	1955	1955	1955	1955	1955	1955	1955
Ystrad Mynach station linc point	0636	0706	0805	0920	1020	1120	1220	1320	1420	1520	1620	1720	1820	2000	Ystrad Mynach station linc point	2000	2000	2000	2000	2000	2000	2000	2000	2000	2000	2000	2000	2000	
	Ystrad Mynach station	0638	0713	0813	0928	1028	1128	1228	1328	1428	1528	1628	1728	1828	2010	gorsaf Ystrad Mynach	2010	2010	2010	2010	2010	2010	2010	2010	2010	2010	2010	2010	
	Llanbradach station	0643	0718	0818	0933	1033	1133	1233	1333	1433	1533	1633	1733	1833	2015	gorsaf Llanbradach	2015	2015	2015	2015	2015	2015	2015	2015	2015	2015	2015	2015	
	Aber station	0647	0722	0822	0937	1037	1137	1237	1337	1437	1537	1637	1737	1837	2019	gorsaf Aber	2019	2019	2019	2019	2019	2019	2019	2019	2019	2019	2019	2019	
	Caerphilly station	0650	0725	0825	0940	1040	1140	1240	1340	1440	1540	1640	1740	1840	2022	gorsaf Caerphilly	2022	2022	2022	2022	2022	2022	2022	2022	2022	2022	2022	2022	
	Lisvane and Thornhill station	0654	0729	0829	0944	1044	1144	1244	1344	1444	1544	1644	1744	1844	2026	gorsaf Llysfaen a Draenen Pen-y-graig	2026	2026	2026	2026	2026	2026	2026	2026	2026	2026	2026	2026	
	Llanishen station	0656	0731	0831	0946	1046	1146	1246	1346	1446	1546	1646	1746	1846	2028	gorsaf Llanishen	2028	2028	2028	2028	2028	2028	2028	2028	2028	2028	2028	2028	
	Heath High Level station	0659	0734	0834	0949	1049	1149	1249	1349	1449	1549	1649	1749	1849	2031	gorsaf Lefel Uchel y Mynydd Bychan	2031	2031	2031	2031	2031	2031	2031	2031	2031	2031	2031	2031	
	Cardiff Queen Street station	0704	0739	0839	0954	1054	1154	1254	1354	1454	1554	1654	1754	1854	2039	gorsaf Caerdydd Heol y Frenhines	2039	2039	2039	2039	2039	2039	2039	2039	2039	2039	2039	2039	
	arrive Cardiff Central station	0709	0744	0847	0959	1059	1159	1259	1359	1459	1559	1659	1759	1859	2047	gorsaf Caerdydd Canolog cyrraedd	2047	2047	2047	2047	2047	2047	2047	2047	2047	2047	2047	2047	
	depart Cardiff Central station	0710	0746		1001	1101	1201	1301	1401	1501	1601	1701	1801	1901		gorsaf Caerdydd Canolog gadael	1901	1901	1901	1901	1901	1901	1901	1901	1901	1901	1901	1901	
	Grangetown station	0714	0750		1005	1105	1205	1305	1405	1505	1605	1705	1805	1905		gorsaf Grangetown	1905	1905	1905	1905	1905	1905	1905	1905	1905	1905	1905	1905	
	Dingle Road station		0756		1011	1111	1211	1311	1411	1511	1611	1711	1811	1911		gorsaf Heol Dingle	1911	1911	1911	1911	1911	1911	1911	1911	1911	1911	1911	1911	
Penarth station		0801		1016	1116	1216	1316	1416	1516	1616	1716	1816	1916		gorsaf Penarth	1916	1916	1916	1916	1916	1916	1916	1916	1916	1916	1916	1916		

On Mondays to Fridays, rail linc also calls at Pontllanfraith House Reception 1 minute before the times in red.  
Ar Ddyddiau Llun i Ddyddiau Gwener, mae'r linc tren hefyd yn galw yn Nerbynfa Ty Pontllan-fraith 1 munud cyn yr amserau mewn coch.

<sup>15</sup> Mainly rail services, but also high-frequency / core bus routes

<sup>16</sup> See for example, Factors Affecting the Decline of Bus Use in the Metropolitan Areas, PTEG, April 2008.



Current state of timetable coordination

6.4 There are a number of well integrated services in South East Wales. In addition to the Rail-link bus services (see box above), there are also a number of other well integrated services, such as the connection at Pontypool between Stagecoach routes X3 (Cardiff – Pontypool) and X33 (Pontypool – Abergavenny), which are guaranteed with through fares are available.

6.5 But overall there is very little timetable integration, and buses often compete with trains. For example, since the demise of the special Rail-link service, the X18 from Ebbw Vale to Newport arrives at the nearest stop to Ebbw Vale Parkway station at xx.17, with the train leaving at xx.40. In the opposite direction trains arrive at xx.31 and buses depart at xx.47. The X15 from Brynmawr and Abertillery to Newport even manages to arrive at Llanhilleth station three minutes *after* the train has departed and leaves six minutes before the Cardiff train is due. The reality is of course that because of the lack of integrated ticketing and the availability of through bus services to many of the destinations served by the trains, connections with trains are currently not a priority for many (existing or potential) passengers.

Delivering timetable coordination

6.6 Sewta believes that a major factor in the lack of timetable co-ordination is the fear of competition issues and possible fines from the Competition Commission. Sewta supports the introduction of a more efficient and effective bus regulatory system<sup>17</sup> to enable regional transport consortia and local authorities to ensure the proper planning of a well co-ordinated public transport network. Sewta will continue to work in partnership with the operators to this end, and the changes emerging from the Bus Funding Review in Wales are anticipated to increase these opportunities. It is also noted that the rail network is operated in a regulated environment, whilst buses operate in a de-regulated, commercial environment; therefore there are fundamental legislative differences in schedule planning.

<sup>17</sup> See RTP policy BUP3 (section 4.8)

6.7 The increased role for the regional transport consortia in managing the distribution of bus funding will require the strengthening of current public sector passenger transport units<sup>18</sup>, which has resource implications for the consortia. Central to the current discussions on the future of bus funding<sup>19</sup>, the consortia together with their local authorities are being asked to develop bus network strategies, and provide an overview of the existing network together with objectives and priorities for the network. Timetable co-ordination is therefore likely to feature very strongly in the establishment of a mechanism to implement such network strategies, and additional funding from the Welsh Government to facilitate their preparation will be needed.

6.8 Demand for interchange is likely to be constrained, if timetable coordination alone is implemented, and there is no ticketing integration, as interchange trips would continue to cost substantially more than single-operator trips. The two aspects of integration need to be fully integrated. The relatively low level of current demand for bus / rail integration is illustrated by the results of bus passenger surveys carried out in Cardiff City centre during 2008. Of the 2,251 respondents stating their origin, 3.6% identified Cardiff Central Railway Station and 3.8% Cardiff Bus Station.

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<sup>18</sup> Passenger transport units are currently more geared towards filling gaps in the network through procuring additional services than managing overall networks.

<sup>19</sup> See paragraph 2.12 above

## **7. Integrated public transport information**

### **Background**

7.1 The provision of accurate information is essential to delivering integrated public transport. The best public transport service will not be used without information, signposting its benefits and detailing how to use it. For integrated public transport to work, the information must show that services are integrated into one network. Because of the inherent increased degree of uncertainty of undertaking multi-leg trips, the information must also be consistent, reliable and repeated both throughout a journey and throughout the transport system.

7.2 The availability of reliable, accurate, accessible and timely information can help to improve the image and attractiveness of public transport, and helps to ensure journeys involving an interchange are easy and convenient. Good information about public transport services enables passengers to know their options and make informed decisions, removing uncertainty and increasing passenger confidence.

#### **Best practice example: London Transport Journey Planning Apps**

In autumn 2011 Transport for London made the data of the real time information systems for its bus, tube and train services available online. There are now a number of journey planner apps for mobile phones that use the real time data, and thus enable passengers to plan trips with a high degree of confidence in the offered connections, as well as checking and updating their travel plans throughout the trip.

An example can be found at <http://londontransportapp.com/>.

### **Current state of information**

7.3 Public transport information in South East Wales lacks consistency and can be inadequate. Whilst some clear high-quality information is produced by Traveline Cymru, operators and local authorities, there remain considerable gaps. In some parts of the region, timetable information (both electronic and printed) is patchy and/or of poor quality. Fares information is even more limited, and too many bus stops display no information at all. Even where quality information exists, it is not consistent across the region, and can be difficult to obtain.

7.4 Integrated public transport information is in particular mixed. The Traveline Cymru Journey Planners, now available as a mobile phone app, incorporate all modes and provide multi-modal trip suggestions. But too many timetables of bus routes do not even make reference to the rail stations they serve, too many bus stops at railway stations do not even have the same name as the station, and rail station information on buses is too often non-existent.

### **Delivering integrated public transport information**

7.5 Sewta supports consistent high quality standards for public transport information provision across the region<sup>20</sup>, for all modes and all services. The NTP also commits the

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<sup>20</sup> See RTP policy IIP3 (section 4.10)

Welsh Government to “Improve the provision of effective transport information, including personal travel planning sites and at-stop information, by 2011”<sup>21</sup>.

7.6 Sewta has previously undertaken an at-stop bus information programme. We are now proposing to work with Traveline Cymru and bus and train operators to extend the programme to include all modes and all types of information necessary for passengers. As set out in the RTP, Sewta is planning to review existing public transport information and to identify existing good practice. This should form the basis to create a consistent standard for all timetable brochures, displays, maps, etc, based upon best practice examples, and to develop a comprehensive and costed multi-modal regional public transport information strategy, which will set out the proposals and the delivery arrangements.

7.7 These tasks have some resource implications. Again, there is the problem that since 2010 Sewta had no funding for the development or implementation of non-capital interventions. Some of the funding of the proposed Regional Transport Services Grant (see above) may be used for provision of integrated information, but in the context of a 25% cut in funding for 2013/14, when compared with 2011/12, this is likely to be very limited. Another avenue may be through the development of a bus information scheme under the Transport Act 2000, though funding to include multi-modal information would be restricted. To our knowledge, no bus information schemes under the Transport Act 2000 exist in Wales. Concerning rail services, it would be helpful if the next franchisees would be required to provide high-quality multi-modal public transport information, including the use of new technologies, such as apps and real time information.

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<sup>21</sup> National Transport Plan intervention 14, NTP page 3

## **8. Integration at planning level**

A further, equally important issue to bring about an integrated public transport system is integration at planning level – that is combined development between spatial planning strategies and transport strategies.

The interactions between land use and transport cannot be overestimated – transport investment facilitates development, while planning decisions strongly influence the demand for transport. Consequently the Sewta Regional Transport Plan contains a number of planning policies, and most spatial and economic development strategies (Wales Spatial Plan, Local Development Plans, the City Region proposal and the “Vibrant and Viable Places” regeneration consultation) make strong references to transportation issues.

As confirmed by the Independent Advisory Group reviewing Planning in Wales, and chaired by John Davies, there is a lack of coherent, robust and up-to-date regional spatial planning framework in Wales. The lack of proper strategic regional development planning means that there is a danger that large scale development goes ahead without the necessary public transport improvements, or at sites where such improvements cannot be delivered, which would have substantial negative consequences for the transport system of the whole region, and for the wider economic, social and environmental aspirations for the region.

Recently the issue has been given further prominence by challenges arising from the emerging Local Development Plans, in particular those facing the Cardiff LDP. Cardiff clearly plays a critical role in the region, but at the LDP Inquiry only proposals within its borders can be considered. A Regional Development Framework, developed together with an updated Regional Transport Plan, would enable future development to be targeted where it could be best served by public transport; and future transport interventions to be targeted where they are most needed across the region.

It is very difficult to develop a functioning integrated public transport system across the region as long as, for example, housing allocations are determined by individual local authorities (and thus must be catered for within each local authority boundaries), instead of regionally (and thus could be planned to optimise public transport accessibility to jobs, shopping, leisure, etc).

## **9. Further comments & conclusion**

9.1 The response outlines what Sewta believes are the elements necessary for an, integrated public transport system, the work Sewta is already undertaking, and the further steps necessary to deliver it.

In its terms of reference, the committee also touched on a number of further issues, which we would like to address.

Issue	Sewta comment
<p>How successful are legal, policy and administrative / delivery arrangements in Wales in supporting effective, integrated public transport services that meet the needs of Welsh travellers?</p> <p>How successful are Regional Transport Consortia in supporting the provision of effective, integrated public transport?</p>	<p>The establishment of regional transport consortia, and the development of Regional Transport Plans, have provided improved focus on planning integrated public transport. The likely regionalisation of bus funding together with increased collaboration between local authorities should further this process. However, the current regulatory framework for bus services continuous to work against integrated public transport services that meet the needs of Welsh travellers.</p>
<p>How effectively does Welsh Government policy support public transport integration? In particular, the Welsh Government is considering the establishment of Joint Transport Authorities in Wales, and the feasibility of operating the Wales and Borders rail franchise on a not-for-dividend basis. Additionally, the Minister for Local Government and Communities has indicated that he is considering the use of quality partnerships and contracts in delivery of bus services. How far would these proposals improve integrated public transport provision in Wales?</p>	<p>The Welsh Transport Strategy and the NTP clearly set out the Welsh Government's support for integrated public transport. It would be helpful however if further information could be made available of how NTP intervention 7 ('Create a series of strategic modal interchanges by 2014') could support the consortia's PT interchange work, and how the current Go Cymru electronic purse could be expanded into a fully integrated ticketing system in line with NTP intervention 6 ('Introduce a Welsh Transport Entitlement Card for bus and rail services, which would include integrated ticketing, to allow 'seamless' transfer between services and operators, by 2014')</p> <p>Concerning the issue of Joint Transport Authorities, Sewta believes that additional powers and resources would be needed at the regional level to deliver a more ambitious regional transport programme. Governance arrangements should be built on those already in place at the South East Wales level, and will need to be tailored to be appropriate for Wales<sup>22</sup>.</p> <p>Operating the Wales and Borders rail franchise on a not-for-dividend basis may offer opportunities for increased integration between rail and bus</p>

<sup>22</sup> See also Sewta Board report on "A Metro for Wales's Capital City Region – Sewta Metro Plus" from March 2012 and "City-Regions Final report – A Response from Sewta" from September 2012.

	<p>services. However, it is important that public transport integration requirements are set down in the franchise specification, whatever framework is eventually chosen for operating the new franchise. Furthermore, Wales still has a number of other rail franchises which enter the country, and perhaps the Welsh Government should, for example, require the inter-city franchises to sign up to be part of the Wales National Transport Entitlement Card System.</p> <p>Quality partnerships can be useful tools for improving the quality of bus services, including issues related to integration. However they typically exclude ticketing, and as they do so their effect on integration will always be limited. Quality Bus Contracts are very much a measure of last resort, as they require any local authority to undertake substantial work to show that it's objectives cannot be delivered otherwise – indeed there is currently not a single Quality Bus Contract operational in the UK. Furthermore, both relate to bus only, in South East Wales public transport integration must include both buses and trains.</p>
<p>What innovative approaches to delivery of public transport in Wales might be considered to improve integration?</p>	<p>Sewta believes that the best way to deliver public transport integration is to replicate successful best practice examples.</p>
<p>How effectively do key stakeholders, particularly transport operators and public bodies, cooperate to ensure effective service delivery?</p>	<p>Stakeholders operate as effectively as they are able within the current legislative arrangements. The main barrier is competition legislation which prevents collusion – inherently restricting opportunities to co-ordinate.</p>
<p>How can the creation of a Network Rail Wales devolved route support effective, integrated public transport in Wales?</p>	<p>The creation of a Network Rail Wales devolved route may provide opportunities to provide dedicated rail feeder services as part of the franchise requirements.</p>

## Conclusion

9.2 In evidence-taking sessions, the committee will hear many comments on the bus and rail services in Wales, and the integration of public transport services. As in Sewta's submission, there will be examples of good practice, of which there are many, and there will be examples of bad practice. However, the best way to judge what is happening is to stand in the street. If you stand in Dumfries Place in Cardiff or at Abergavenny railway station, and observe the bus and rail services, then do the same thing in Swansea, Wrexham, Liverpool or Birmingham, you will see a standard of integration and service delivery that is not consistent in quality. On the other hand, if you go to London or virtually

any city in Spain, Italy, Belgium, France or Germany you will see a standard of service that is palpably better than that in the south of Wales and the rest of the UK. This is a strong way to judge what is happening, and where we should look to learn about a fully integrated public transport network.

9.3 Despite the good examples and recent progress, integration within the public transport system in South East Wales still compares poorly with that in London or equivalent conurbations in continental Europe. Sewta does not believe integrated public transport will deliver a high-quality system on its own. But it is a necessary and essential ingredient, without which a modern, accessible and sustainable transport system that increases opportunity, promotes prosperity for all and protects the environment cannot be delivered.

9.4 Unless a step-change is achieved in public transport integration, Sewta will fail to achieve its vision, the Welsh Government will fail to deliver its commitment to a networked city region in South East Wales, and transport will under-perform in providing accessibility for all, and supporting the Welsh Government's goal of economic growth and increased employment. To conclude, a step change in the availability of funding is required now to achieve the aim of a fully integrated public transport system. Furthermore, greater collaboration between different organisations, including operators, Government and passenger groups, as well as the regional transport consortia and their local authority members, is required to ensure a system that meets the needs of the passenger is delivered.

## **ENTERPRISE AND BUSINESS COMMITTEE'S INQUIRY INTO INTEGRATED PUBLIC TRANSPORT**

I welcome this opportunity to submit my written evidence to the Enterprise and Business Committee in response to its Inquiry into Integrated Public Transport in Wales. I look forward to discussing my evidence in more detail with the Committee on 24 January 2013.

High quality, integrated public transport, is critical for economic growth, social inclusion and the reduction of poverty. Fragmented and poorly coordinated transport networks impact on our employment base, local labour markets and wellbeing. At this time of economic uncertainty and rising fuel prices, integrated public transport is more important than ever in order to link people to jobs and services. It is also vitally important for connecting people who live in rural areas and remote communities to the services that they need.

As we face even more difficult economic and public spending challenges there is a need for greater impetus behind our plans to deliver a more integrated public transport system across Wales. There exists a considerable evidence base that suggests that integrated public transport is highly beneficial in both economic and social terms. Investing in integrated public transport is good value for money as it often contributes to wider economic benefits through greater access to jobs and training, increased competition between operators and greater labour force participation. In addition, passenger benefits, public safety benefits, congestion relief benefits and environmental benefits help make the case for a greater shift towards integrated public transport, which includes more active travel opportunities through increased walking and cycling.

Although my prioritised National Transport Plan reflects the importance that we all attach to improving economic indicators, the difficult economic situation must not be allowed to overshadow the environmental improvements that result from a shift in travel patterns from private cars to buses, and trains.

### **The Current Position**

Whilst we are making good progress with our plans for an integrated transport system, more work needs to be done if we are to turn the corner and encourage a greater shift in the use of public transport. We have continued to see a significant increase in rail use over the last year, with Arriva Trains Wales's passenger numbers up 3.5% on 12 months ago, and up more than 60% since the franchise began in 2003.

The number of passenger journeys on local bus services increased by 2m between 2010 and 2011, to 115m. Around 83% of adults aged 60 and over hold a bus pass, and make around 50m concessionary bus journeys a year, and this represents more than 40% of all local bus journeys.

At the same time, we need to do more to encourage greater participation in walking and cycling. For example, during 2011 just over 10% of travel to work journeys were on foot, and 1.4% on a bicycle. The Active Travel Bill, which will be introduced into the Assembly later this year, aims to enable more people to walk and cycle and to make walking and cycling the most natural and normal way of getting about.

It is intended that the Bill will require local authorities to continuously improve facilities and routes for pedestrians and cyclists and to prepare maps identifying current and potential future routes for their use. The Bill will also require new road schemes (including road improvement schemes) to consider the needs of pedestrians and cyclists at design stage.

We will continue to work closely with our partners in the public and private sectors to plan expenditure so that it is co-ordinated effectively, and maximises its beneficial impacts. Those impacts must include economic, social and environmental outcomes.

The Committee has received a number of responses about the barriers that inhibit public transport integration. There remain a number of organisational, financial and cultural barriers standing in the way of greater public transport integration.

The key barriers to integration centre around:

- a lack of devolution and control – especially limited control over bus services;
- fragmented ownership of public transport coupled with little competition;
- a lack of joined-up working across key policy areas, particularly land use;
- public funding constraints, and
- the continual challenge of making public transport an attractive and realistic alternative to the private car for many daily and routine journeys.

### **The Wales Transport Strategy and National Transport Plan**

The Wales Transport Strategy established the overarching framework for the creation of an integrated transport system.

In March 2012, I published the latest monitoring report against the outcomes of the Wales Transport Strategy. These indicate that we are making significant progress.

Our key indicators report that:

- 86% of Welsh households are within six minutes walk to their nearest bus stop, and 97% are within 13 minutes' walking time

- 87% of households are within 90 minutes travel by public transport of a NHS major acute hospital; while 76% of households are within 15 minutes travel time by public transport to a GP surgery
- Almost all (97%) households in Wales are within 15 minutes' cycling of a primary school, and 91% by public transport
- Nearly two out of every three people aged over 16 years are within a 15-minutes public transport journey of a further, higher or adult education establishment

The Strategy's aims are being delivered through the implementation of the prioritised National Transport Plan and Regional Transport Plans. In December 2011, I published a prioritised National Transport Plan that sets out the concrete actions that will be taken by the Welsh Government to deliver an integrated transport system for Wales.

In June last year, I reported to the Committee the progress we have made in delivering the priorities set out in the National Transport Plan. Further progress has been made since then and this is discussed in more detail below.

### **Information**

The provision of comprehensive public transport information such as route maps, printed timetables, audio-visual announcements, signs at interchanges, together with internet, text messaging and web based services are vital components of an integrated transport system.

The availability of easily-accessible, up-to-date and reliable information is a key issue affecting people's decisions on whether to undertake a journey by public transport.

In April 2012, the Public Transport Users' Committee (PTUC) published its report into the provision of public transport information in Wales. The Committee found that information across the public transport network is often inconsistent and fragmented. The Committee set out a number of recommendations that aim to improve the quality of that information, and make it easier to access.

We are working with public transport operators, the RTCs and Bus Users UK in Wales to take forward the PTUC's recommendations.

In addition, I am providing funding of around £1m per annum to help support Traveline Cymru as a one-stop shop for the provision of information on public transport services. Traveline Cymru continues to adapt to changing times and has developed new services that accommodate texts and online journey planning, whilst also retaining a traditional telephone call centre.

During 2012 Traveline Cymru handled more than 2m enquiries for public transport information. The proportion of enquiries being taken in the form of texts from mobile phones continues to grow, while the number of calls to the call centre declines. Nevertheless, the call centre continued to provide a much-valued service for many public transport users. For example, latest customer satisfaction surveys confirm that some 95% of people are satisfied with Traveline's Contact Centre, and 92% will continue to use its website.

As well as contacting Traveline Cymru by phone or the internet, passengers can now get bus times on their mobile phones through its free applications for iPhone and Android, Traveline NextBuses and Traveline.txt.

These free and bilingual apps for iPhone and Android enable users to find public transport information for the whole of Wales in one place. The application allows users to:

- Plan a journey;
- Check travel alerts;
- Find a bus stop on a map, and
- Search for community transport or Park and Ride services.

### **Integrated Ticketing**

Integrated ticketing and fares can improve public transport affordability and encourage modal shift away from the car. Fare integration such as flat fares for short journeys, zonal fares for regional journeys and distance fares for longer journeys create a common and easy to understand structure. It also has the potential to include uniform provision of concessionary travel schemes for elderly and disabled people as well as young people. In addition, integrated arrangements provide commercial opportunities for the private sector and encourage off-vehicle sales to speed up boarding times.

There are already some good examples of system-wide tickets in Wales such as Plusbus, the Explore Wales Pass and West Wales Rover.

Our multimodal "GoCymru" Smartcard, which will act as an integrated ticket that will allow a seamless transfer between services and operators throughout Wales, is currently being trialled on buses in Cardiff and Newport. A larger pilot in north Wales which will include Bangor and Wrexham is expected to begin shortly. Go Cymru builds on the ITSO smartcard technology platform to deliver better value for money and more reliable public transport services.

The roll out across buses in Wales is due to start later this year ahead of the National Transport Plan commitment date of 2014. Our strong preference was to extend the GoCymru card to also include train services but we need to secure value for money in doing so. Discussions that we have had with Arriva Trains Wales suggest that this is unlikely to be possible ahead of the new Wales and Borders franchise, in 2018.

## **Network Integration**

Network integration works best through the integration of both public and private transport. This involves the co-ordination of public transport timetables, the provision of interchanges, car parking controls and bus priority improvements as well as additional investment in smarter choice measures. The Active Travel Bill and the supporting Active Travel programme will have a particularly important part to play in encouraging more walking and cycling. Together these interventions will help move people from private to public transport, help to alleviate congestion, and thereby make public transport a more attractive alternative to the private car for more journeys. .

Timetables can be spread out at clock-face intervals or organised in a way which allows them to be linked up with other modes of public transport. The use of statutory bus quality partnership schemes (see below) provides local authorities with greater powers to work closely with the bus industry to plan and deliver local bus services that better meet the needs of local communities. Under such schemes, the local authorities are able to put in place arrangements that will secure the better co-ordination of bus timetables so that passengers will find it easier to switch to connecting bus and rail services to complete their journey.

Interchange hubs (such as at Caerphilly, Pontypridd and Bangor) together with park and ride and park and share sites facilitate connections between services through easy interchanges and the provision of convenience facilities. In addition, local bus service stability and reliability through effective use of parking controls and bus priority measures are highly valued by public transport users. Publicity for and at interchanges could usefully refer to the environmental benefits that result from such investment.

In 2012-13, I provided £18m capital to the Regional Transport Consortia (RTCs) to support investment in a range of transport measures. The majority of this funding has been spent on integrated transport improvements. I am also bringing forward regulations that will allow local authorities to take enforcement action against those who contravene moving traffic and bus lane regulations, as part of their general traffic management duties for ensuring the free flow of traffic across the local road network. Those powers will complement the existing powers that local authorities have for taking enforcement action against parking contraventions.

Investment in the promotion of smarter choices such as travel planning can encourage more sustainable travel choices such as public transport as well as walking and cycling especially when coupled with investment in public transport. This is why I have made available £1.35m for the Personalised Travel Planning programme.

## **Active Travel Bill**

We have published our White Paper on the Active Travel Bill. This legislation will play a key part in encouraging more people to try and enjoy Wales's wealth of cycling and walking opportunities. My intention is that local authorities in Wales should be required to:

- identify and map the network of routes within their areas that are safe and appropriate for walking and cycling;
- identify and map the enhancements that would be required to create a fully integrated network for walking and cycling and develop a prioritised list of schemes to deliver the network;
- deliver an enhanced network subject to budget availability and following due process; and
- consider the potential for enhancing walking and cycling provision in the development of new road schemes

## **Regional Transport Consortia**

I have been working with the Welsh local government to progress the collaboration agenda in transport. Good progress is being made in taking forward the commitment in the Compact and in strengthening the regional planning, prioritisation and delivery of transport investments.

As part of these plans, I announced on 4 December, the creation of a Task Force that will be at the forefront of driving forward the development of an integrated transport system in south east Wales. The Task Force builds on the discussions I have been having with SEWTA on how we can work together with our partners to maximise the benefits from the unique opportunity that electrification of the Valley Lines and the Great Western Main Line provides for economic growth and social inclusion as well as reducing poverty in this important region.

I have asked the Task Force to make recommendations for a rapid transit system for south east Wales using rail, light rail, bus and active travel which meets the needs of passengers and businesses and builds on the benefits from electrification. I expect the Task Force to apply a holistic approach to public transport, road travel and walking and cycling to maximise outcomes and develop a vision to illustrate the future of transport in south east Wales and a proposed management structure to drive this forward. I am expecting a report from the Task Force in the next few months.

I also want to make sure that we make the most of the opportunities in north east Wales that will build on the multi-modal opportunities identified in the recently published North East Wales Area Based Transport Study. I am working with Taith to develop a similar joint approach for a prioritised and phased programme of action.

## **Local Bus Services**

Bus services have a vital role to play in an integrated transport system. Local authorities may subsidise socially necessary local bus services although these represent around 20% of total vehicle miles operated by bus companies. More importantly, they have little power to determine fares, service levels or service quality on the commercial bus network. They are also required to demonstrate that the support they give to socially necessary services does not negatively impact on the commercial network. In addition they are well placed to harness the contribution that can be made by community transport.

The Transport Act 2000 and Local Transport Act 2008 provide powers for local authorities to make statutory bus Quality Partnership Schemes (QPSs) and Quality Contracts.

Under such schemes, authorities can work closely with bus operators to plan and deliver services that meet the needs of local communities. A QPS will ensure that local authorities and bus operators deliver binding commitments that share the objective of making bus travel a more attractive option for everyone. These may include maximum fares and co-ordinated timetables.

I would like to see more statutory bus QPSs in place to shape the provision of bus services. I believe that statutory bus Quality Partnership Schemes offer to achieve what we wish the bus industry to deliver, but I will continue to keep that under review, especially if there is little evidence that sufficient work is being done to evaluate the potential for such partnership schemes. I would also consider supporting Quality Contract Schemes where there is clear evidence that a partnership approach will not deliver the improvements that we want.

I would expect the Task Force in south east Wales and the work for taking forward the multi-modal study in north east Wales to consider the contribution that such schemes can make for delivering our aspirations for an integrated transport system.

Quality Contracts require the consent of Welsh Ministers to what are, in effect, bus franchises. I will look to bring forward regulations on this during 2013-14, so that there is a full suite of powers available to influence the provision and standards of bus services, if voluntary and statutory partnerships are not taken up with sufficient vigour.

I have also taken the opportunity to relax the regulatory framework around section 22 permits that make it easier for community transport services to provide community based bus services particularly in rural areas and remote communities where more conventional services would be more expensive.

Our free concessionary bus travel scheme - which now also includes seriously-injured service personnel and seriously-injured service veterans – remains a huge success. The scheme continues to offer a level of accessibility envied by pass holders elsewhere in the UK.

Despite severe funding constraints, we continue to allow free travel at any time of day, and on every day that services run, including weekends and bank holidays.

There are around 700,000 pass holders throughout Wales. The scheme's cost has increased over time, requiring about £70m this year to meet operators' reimbursement and local authorities' administrative costs. This is managed because we have a ground-breaking agreement with local authorities and bus operators that means they are fully-funded for all of their costs, while also providing me with certainty that the scheme will not cost more than £213m over the period 2011-14.

The Secretary of State for Transport is responsible for the work of Traffic Commissioners. However, I am providing an office for the Commissioners in Brunel House in Cardiff, allowing them to develop closer and better relationships with local authorities and bus operators in Wales. That office is also available to the three Bus Compliance Officers employed by Bus Users UK in Wales – but funded by me - to help maintain and improve the performance of bus operators throughout Wales.

### **Traws Cymru Bus Network**

One of my key priorities in the prioritised National Transport Plan is to develop the TrawsCymru long distance bus network that will provide improved services to our major towns that are no longer linked by connecting rail services.

In March 2012, I launched a new T4 service between Newtown and Merthyr with onward travel to Cardiff with investment of round £1m in six new, low floor vehicles. Since its introduction the service has seen passenger numbers increase by more than 22%.

My officials are now working closely with the RTCs on a strategic plan for delivering further improvements to the Network. I will make further information available about this in due course.

We worked at length with Ceredigion and Carmarthenshire Councils to develop a statutory bus Quality Partnership Scheme for Traws Cymru services between Aberystwyth and Cardigan. We continue to have discussions with Arriva Buses about the terms of that scheme. In addition, we shall look at the case for developing a Quality Contract for that corridor.

## **Transport Funding**

The UK Government has imposed upon us a significant cut in our funding – some £1.7bn over three years – and there is likely to be less funding available for the foreseeable future. Despite these cuts my funding in support of public transport represents about half of my total transport budget.

## **Bus Funding Review**

In March 2012 I announced a thorough review of the funding that we provide in support of bus and community transport services. I was determined that the public's funding in support of private companies should be focussed on those outcomes that passengers most wish to see, and which are most likely to encourage more people to use buses. Only that will help sustain fare box income and make the bus network more resilient in the longer-term. This required a move away from providing public money to bus operators in return for running services that were not even required to carry passengers to a system in which public money will achieve particular outcomes.

The review has also helped us to respond to the reduced funding available from the public sector whilst still protecting local bus services.

The existing arrangements, in which we provide funding to 22 local authorities, are unnecessarily bureaucratic. Future funding will therefore be routed through our RTCs, bringing efficiencies of scale in administration, and requiring bus and community transport services to be considered alongside rail and other modes within a regional network.

Based upon a working assumption of £25m in 2013-14, the RTCs have already begun work with bus and community transport operators to identify the sort of networks that are likely to operate from 1 April. Commercial services will receive a fee per service mile, excluding so-called dead mileage. Contracted services will be supported through the terms of their contracts.

The RTCs will develop regional public transport strategies during 2013-14 that will also prioritise future investment to reflect available funding and specific outcomes that we wish to see. These outcomes might include, for example, driver training on disability awareness, improved information at bus stops, SAFED safer and more efficient driving, or on-board audible and visual announcements.

The new scheme will be a significant improvement in identifying what public transport we support and why, and lead to a much improved mechanism for developing integrated transport in Wales.

## **Rail Services**

I wish to see a modern and more effective rail system in Wales that is more accessible so that more people may access a high-quality yet affordable rail system. We are increasingly influencing the future of rail in Wales, and we are working to secure more direct involvement in the planning and delivery of a modern rail network. The current round of strategic planning by Network Rail will dovetail with our refresh of the Wales policy and planning framework. The new policy and planning framework, which will cover the period beyond 2015, will set out our priorities for rail investment across Wales into the future and inform our priorities for future rail investment periods – as well as our priorities for other modes.

I have opened discussions with the Secretary of State for Transport on the case for modernisation for north Wales, and we will work with the UK Government to make the case for these improvements. Key decision-making powers may lie with the UK Government, but we will use all levers at our disposal to increase our influence over the rail network and services in Wales.

Currently the Welsh Government is a joint signatory with the Secretary of State for Transport on the current Wales and Borders franchise, and a new franchise is due to be in place in 2018.

Current legislation does not align with the effective delivery of my priorities. As we begin detailed work ahead of the Wales and Borders franchise being re-let in 2018, and in line with our manifesto commitment, we will examine the case for additional powers. We need to consider options for change very carefully. The way legal and funding structures underpinning the railways have developed means there are complex relationships, funding arrangements and issues of risk apportionment. It is important that we fully understand the risks and costs that any legislative change may bring before making any decisions.

To understand options for change, we have begun to engage externally by hosting a one-day conference where rail industry experts and leaders shared their expertise. We will continue to gather intelligence so that we have a wide range of evidence and a detailed understanding before making any decisions.

## **Railways Infrastructure**

Our railway stations are the vital first point of contact for people with rail travel. Thanks to years of under-investment by the UK Government, which retains the responsibility and funding for rail infrastructure and station improvements, many of our stations are in a poor state. Too many of them are inaccessible to wheelchairs. I therefore continue to press the UK Government and Network Rail to prioritise station improvements in Wales, including accessibility upgrades.

Network Rail's current programme of works under the Cardiff Area Signalling Renewal scheme involve major upgrades to Cardiff Central and Queen Street stations, which I welcome, and the Regional Transport Consortia are using Welsh Government funding to match-fund UK Government Access for All upgrades at Chirk, Machynlleth, Ystrad Mynach, Llandaff and Radyr stations.

In addition, my Wales Station Improvement Programme (NSIP+), with the benefit of European Structural Fund assistance, is a £40m programme funding major upgrades at Llandudno, Rhyl, Aberystwyth, Pontypridd, Port Talbot and Ystrad Mynach stations, as well as accessibility upgrades in west Wales and on our rural branch lines.

### **Future Wales and Borders rail franchise**

The next franchise should specify a service that meets passengers' needs has a reputation for high standards, growth and innovation and offers value for money. Under current legislation the Department for Transport (DfT) is responsible for re-letting the Wales and Borders franchise, while the Welsh Government is a statutory consultee for franchises operating into Wales. We will examine the arrangements in relation to our role with the Wales and Borders franchise from 2018, with a view to a greater involvement. We are discussing with DfT refranchising and future funding requirements.

We will examine options for the next Wales and Borders franchise including both for profit and not-for-dividend models. We want to ensure that the future franchise continues to play an important part in connectivity, delivers value for money for taxpayers and improves the service for customers. It is important that we fully understand the risks and benefits of the future franchise before deciding upon the shape of it.

The Welsh Government is also examining the franchising process to see if there is something about the process itself that has resulted in alternative models of franchise operator, whether not-for-dividend or co-operative lead, not being successful. Any future approach will be informed by learning from the UK Government's review of the West Coast franchise and should seek to engage our communities, our workforce, offer the best value for money for taxpayers and meet the transport needs of Wales. During the early part of this year, we will carry out a public consultation on the policy objectives for rail in Wales so that we start from the right position.

### **Taxis and Private Hire Vehicles**

Taxis and PHVs are a staple element of the transport network in Wales, and in most countries in the world. For many people, taxis and PHVs provide an essential form of transport enabling them to travel to work and to vital amenities such as shops and medical facilities, as well as leisure activity.

Demographically, the largest market for taxi services is the 18 to 29 age group who make an estimated 20 trips per year as against an annual average of 11 trips.

People in the lowest 20% of incomes are 40% more likely to use taxis and PHVs than those in the highest 20%. Taxi and PHV point-to-point services are essential for disabled passengers.

The sector facilitates many short, local transport journeys outside the conventional bus network, provides many inter-modal journeys, and also meets the needs of many students whose home-to-school journeys might not otherwise be possible.

In May 2012, the Law Commission published a consultation paper setting out its provisional proposals for reform of the legal framework relating to taxis and PHVs. In addition to considering the licensing issues, the Commission also made suggestions covering a wide range of issues, including improving provision for persons with disabilities, quantity restrictions and enforcement. The consultation closed in September, and the Commission is currently reviewing responses. Once that work is completed, the Commission will submit a report to the UK Government including recommendations, and it is possible that will also incorporate proposals for new legislation.

The Welsh Government has contributed to this work, and we continue to work closely with the Law Commission and the UK Government to make sure we can make the most of any new opportunities that will emerge for the work of the Law Commission. In the meantime, we are working closely with the RTCs to explore what we can do to raise standards across the sector.

### **Carriage of bicycles on buses**

The Welsh Government encourages bus operators to explore opportunities to carry bicycles where it is safe and sensible to do so. I congratulate those operators who, despite there being no requirement on them to do so, allow and encourage bicyclists to travel by bus, where there is capacity to accommodate the bicycle safely.

### **Examples of integration**

In partnership with the Vale of Glamorgan Council, we fund a Cardiff Airport bus link service between the Airport, Rhoose train station and St. Athan Enterprise Zone. That links aircraft with trains using dedicated buses. The First Minister and I are determined to work with the Airport, public authorities and others to maximise its potential.

In north Wales, I am supporting an improved railway station in Llandudno Junction, including bus bays for intermodal transfers. Aberystwyth train station is also being improved.

In Caerphilly, there has been an effective multi-modal public transport hub for a number of years.

In south-west Wales, Bwcabus is testing innovative ways of connecting remote and often isolated communities with the conventional bus and train network. It is a good example of partnership working between the Welsh Government, Carmarthenshire and Ceredigion Councils, and the University of Glamorgan. The academic connection is significant, because Bwcabus is testing new software that has not been used anywhere else in the UK.

## **Land Use Planning**

Some of the responses to the Committee's consultation rightly highlight the important role that planning legislation has to play in facilitating public transport. I would like planning authorities and developers to work more closely together when first proposing schools, hospitals, medical centres, or industrial, commercial or retail developments, so that the provision of effective multimodal public transport is built into those plans from the outset.

## **The Silk Commission**

On 20 November, the First Minister welcomed the publication of a report by the UK Government's Silk Commission, which proposed comprehensive changes to Wales's financial powers.

As the First Minister said, the report contains some very important recommendations that representatives from our four main political parties have been able to agree upon, and which fit well with our views on the future path of financial reform.

The Commission's report, along with a statement on funding reform that was published jointly with the UK Government in October, provides a solid base for delivering lasting reforms. We are giving the report careful consideration and will look to work with the UK Government to make quick progress on this agenda.

## **Roads**

Organisations representing the business sector referred to the condition of roads in their responses to the Committee's consultation, adding that their state of disrepair is having an adverse impact on their businesses.

It is important to recognise that we spend over £100m on road maintenance and renewals each year on the strategic network. We have a prioritised programme of infrastructure projects across the strategic network in Wales. We provide additional revenue funding to local authorities, which will enable them to invest approximately £170m on the local network over next three financial years.

I intend asking our Trunk Road Agents to include public transport operators when consulting on planned closures of the trunk road network. This would primarily apply to long-term closures instigated by public utility works on urban trunk roads, but would also include our own short-term and longer-term maintenance works where consultation would be required if local transport services are affected.

**CARL SARGEANT**  
**MINISTER FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND COMMUNITIES**