

Pwyllgor Newid Hinsawdd, yr Amgylchedd a Seilwaith / Climate Change, Environment and Infrastructure Committee

Teithio ar fysiau a'r rheilffordd yng Nghymru / Bus and rail transport in Wales  
BRT11

Ymateb gan Awdurdod Trafnidiaeth Rhanbarth Prifddinas Caerdydd / Evidence from Cardiff Capital Region Transport Authority (CCRTA)

## **CLIMATE CHANGE, ENVIRONMENT & INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE.**

### **BUS & RAIL TRANSPORT IN WALES INQUIRY – 13<sup>th</sup> JULY 2022.**

### **EVIDENCE OF ROGER WATERS ON BEHALF OF CARDIFF CAPITAL REGION TRANSPORT AUTHORITY (CCRTA).**

**5<sup>th</sup> JULY 2022**



1. The following evidence should be read as an officer response to the request for evidence which at the time of submission has not been endorsed by the CCRTA member board. Officers have contributed to the work of the WLGA and therefore support and endorse the evidence that the WLGA has submitted. Rather than repeat these points, emphasis is provided related to issues that are of more concern or specific to the CCRTA.
2. This evidence focuses on 2 areas of inquiry for the Committee;
  - White Paper/ Franchising
  - Highways Maintenance Funding.

#### **White Paper / Franchising**

3. The CCRTA region contains approximately half the population of Wales, its residents undertake approximately half the concessionary travel in Wales and around half the bus kilometres in Wales occur in the CCR.
4. Car ownership is low; up to a third of households in some LAs do not have access to a private car. Yet over 80% of commuters use a private car for their journey to and from work.
5. Pre-pandemic, a very high proportion of bus services operated on a commercial basis – circa 90% in urban areas throughout the working day.

6. The CCRTA is therefore concerned regarding the impact on service standards and would assert that pre-covid service coverage should be the minimum requirement for future services across CCR under a franchised regime.
7. Additional investment will be required to tackle climate change which enhances public transport and increases sustainable mode share.

Namely;

- a. establish a planned and integrated network with rail and other modes
  - b. integrate ticketing and introduce attractive fare structures to encourage patronage
  - c. consideration of extending concessions to rail for integrated services
  - d. ensuring fare structures do not penalise communities that are off the rail network and rely on bus and rail for key journeys (risk of communities withering in the vine)
  - e. improve the quality of infrastructure and information
  - f. improve bus priority so that bus journey times are faster and more reliable.
8. South Wales Metro – circa £750M investment in conjunction with Cardiff Capital Region City Deal, UK Government, Welsh Government and EU funding. The First Phase of the south Wales Metro is progressing (electrification of the Core Valley Lines and the introduction of Tram/Trains), but Metro was launched as a £4Bn concept. It will not be a “Metro” without further significant investment. More investment is required to develop and deliver future phases.
  9. A focus on mode shift across the CCRTA will provide Welsh Government with the best opportunity to meet its Climate Change targets for transport.

### **Highway Maintenance Funding**

10. Local Councils are the Highway Authorities responsible for maintaining the highway network with the exception of Trunk Roads and Motorways which are the responsibility of Welsh Government.
11. Alarm survey; [ALARM-survey-2022-FINAL.pdf \(asphaltuk.org\)](#) – shows backlog cost up by 23%, catch-up would take 9 years and cost £12.64Bn (UK). Under-investment = structural decline.
12. In Wales the County Surveyors Society (Wales) has also undertaken work to review highway maintenance (CSSW State of Highway Maintenance Funding, June 2022 - Appendix A attached).

13. Wales has benefitted from the Welsh Government Local Government Borrowing Initiative (LGBI) approximately 10 years ago which injected additional funding into highway maintenance. This initiative encouraged LAs to transition from a reactive approach to maintenance – filling pot holes, towards an asset management approach with a more pro-active strategy of maintenance intervention before pot holes develop.
14. This initiative endured for around 3 years before terminating. More recently, for each of the last 3 years, local authorities have benefitted from a Road Refurbishment Grant of circa £20m/yr across Wales – distributed to individual LAs with the quantum per LA being determined by a formulaic approach.
15. Other pertinent funding has come following Storm Dennis in February 2020; the Welsh Government Resilient Roads Grant has enabled LAs to bid for funding to make roads more resilient during extreme weather events, recognising the adverse impact weather has on the road network and anticipating continued worsening as a result of climate change. The scheme has a particular focus on ensuring public transport routes are more resilient.
16. These sources of additional funding (above and beyond what LAs already commit from their own resources) have been most welcomed and have enabled some targeted local improvements to resilience.

However it is important to be clear about the current outlook and evolving funding position;

17. The highway network is the highest value asset held by each individual council (e.g. the Gross Replacement value in RCTCBC is £3.4Bn).
18. The quality of the network is often perceived and judged by the condition of its carriageway surfacing and LAs have tended to focus on this as the primary asset for investment for external and internal funding. Consequently carriageway condition has held up better than some of the buried assets.
19. The network is comprised of many other major asset classes;
  - a. Carriageways
  - b. Footways
  - c. Structures (Bridges, Retaining Structures, Large Culverts)
  - d. Highway Drainage
  - e. Safety Barriers
  - f. Street Lighting and Traffic Signs & Signals
20. The focus on “pot holes” can be to the detriment of other key asset classes. They are often the subject of media interest, politicians’ inboxes will be dominated by residents’ concerns about pot holes, they are a clear and obvious sign of the level of investment in the highway network.

21. Assets such as Structures and Highway Drainage tend to be out of sight and out of mind until there is a failure and roads, bridges, etc., have to be closed for costly and disruptive emergency repairs.
22. Whilst the backlog position on carriageways is relatively easy to calculate, the position on structures and highway drainage is less clear. More work is needed to fully understand the scale of the problem but it is asserted that there is a general underfunding of maintenance/replacement of these assets which have a finite lifespan.
23. Active Travel predominantly takes place on the highway network or on dedicated routes that are maintained from the general highways maintenance budget.
24. Bus services and home to school transport are reliant on a resilient local highways network. Bus infrastructure (bus shelters, bus stops, bus stations, bus priority) is also predominantly maintained by councils from their general highways maintenance budget or competes with highway maintenance within the same broad maintenance funding pot.

#### Funding Position;

25. Ten plus years of austerity.
26. A Roads Review was established by Welsh Government in 2021. This effectively suspended funding support for emerging new road building projects to enable a review and to provide the opportunity to redirect that funding towards more sustainable options to address the Climate Change emergency, including managing and maintaining our current highways assets more effectively.
27. Roads Refurbishment Grant – ended in 2021/22 and has not been replaced.
28. Resilient Roads Grant has been amalgamated into Local Transport Fund Grant and seemingly reduced (e.g. RCT secured approximately £6m in the first 2 years but only £0.4m this year against a bid of £2.4m).
29. Active Travel – increased Welsh Government capital funding for new infrastructure to £75m in 2022/23.

#### The Challenge;

30. Growth in Active Travel Infrastructure is diluting the impact of existing highways maintenance budgets.
31. Grants that support effective highways maintenance have been terminated, deferred or reduced.

32. The buried assets are largely operating well beyond their design life and are deteriorating.
33. Climate change is accelerating the degradation of all highways assets.
34. Rampant cost escalation of materials, labour, fuel, energy together with general inflation will reduce the amount of work that can be commissioned from existing budgets.
35. All of society is reliant on a well maintained highways network.

Roger Waters 5 July 2022.

Director of Frontline Services, Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council  
Chair of the CCRTA Officer Group.

## Appendix A

### **CSSW – State of Highway Maintenance Funding, June 2022**

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#### **1. The Universal Public Asset**

Every public service relies in some way on the existence of a safe and fit for purpose highway network. The 33,000km of roads and associated footways, structures, lighting, signs etc., managed by local authorities in Wales range from busy major roads to remote rural lanes. They enable trips to schools, hospitals, shops, to see doctors, friends and family to be taken. It is assumed that regardless of whether trips are taken by foot, on a bicycle, by bus or coach, or in a car, the roads, footways, bridges, lights, signs etc will be safe and available to use.

#### **2. The Invisible Asset/Liability**

Some aspects of highway condition are evident to users, pot holes in roads and trips in footways. Users will and do observe when these are present and may notify the council of the need for repair. The majority of highway assets are not visible. The structure of roads and footways are unseen as are bridges and many walls. These items of infrastructure have been constructed over many decades. Many of them, either wholly or in part, are reaching an age and state of deterioration where replacement or refurbishment is required.

### 3. Substantial and Growing Backlog# of Deferred Maintenance

Historical underinvestment in road maintenance has led to a very substantial backlog of repair and replacement totalling **£ 2,043 million** made up of:

- **£1,042m;** Roads (carriageways)
- **£222m;** footways
- **£719m;** structures (bridges, culverts walls etc)
- **£76m;** street lighting

#The backlog is the cost of returning assets in a deteriorated condition to a good condition.

### 4. Huge Quantities in Need of Maintenance Works

The works required to remove backlog are:

- Resurfacing of **14,300km roads**
- Replacement or resurfacing of **5,400km of footways**
- Refurbishment of **3,444 structures (bridges, culverts, walls, etc)**
- Replacement of **67,000 street lighting columns**

### 5. Ongoing Repair of Tens of Thousands of Defects Required

The dilapidated state of the network means that very large number of reactive repairs are required to ensure the roads are safe for use. During the last year 73,000 carriageway and 51,000 footway defects were repaired. Approximately 51,000 street lighting faults were repaired. In addition, repairs were carried out to bridges, walls, signs, traffic signals, bollards and other assets.

### 6. Investment Level are not Sufficient to Prevent Deterioration

Asset Group	Steady State	Ave. Annual funding, (last 5yrs)	% Of steady state
Carriageways	£76m pa	£67m	77%
Footways	£11m pa		
Structures (incl. bridges)	£55m pa	£21m pa	38%
Street Lighting	£14m pa	£11m pa	79%
<b>Total</b>	<b>£143m</b>	<b>£99m</b>	<b>63%</b>

Investment levels over the last 5 years have been £99mpa. This included approximately £20m pa. provided by Welsh Government in the form of the Highways Refurbishment Grant for 3 of those years. This equates to 63% of the estimated annual investment required to keep the asset in its current state. Grant monies enabled deterioration to be abated for carriageways. Without grant funding the asset will return to the deteriorating state that all other asset group remain in.

### **7. Road Refurbishment Grant Funding [Enabled Deterioration to be Abated]**

The Roads Refurbishment Grant provided approximately £20m pa nationally for 3 years. The grant funding provided a welcome opportunity to slow the rate at which the asset has been deteriorating. It ended in 2021/22 and has not been replaced. Current funding levels are insufficient to prevent a reversion to a deteriorating state of all asset groups.

### **8. Cost increases will Exacerbate Funding Pressures**

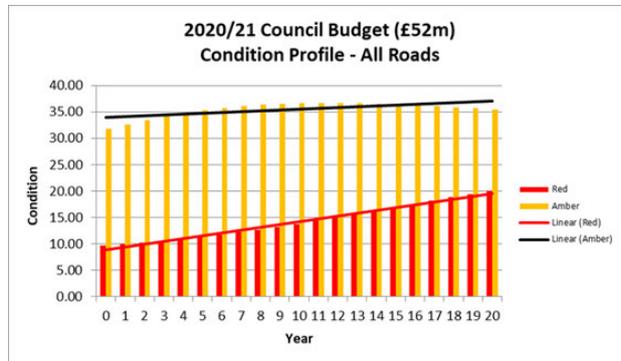
Rampant cost escalation of materials, labour, fuel, energy together with general inflation will reduce the amount of work that can be commissioned from existing budgets. Increases more than 20% have been reported this year. Hyperinflation is however expected to continue and will exacerbate the problems outlined above

### **9. Resilience of the Network**

Storm events in recent years, such as storm Dennis in 2020, have highlighted how vulnerable the network is to the effect of extreme weather events. More frequent storms with high impact are predicted into the future. In years when harsh winter conditions occur significant increases of pavement repairs are required as water gets into the pavement and the action of freeze and thaw breaks up the surface. The network is susceptible to impact from extreme weather and future events will continue to cause significant problems unless greater resilience can be created. Planned maintenance and more rigorous routine maintenance of drainage assets are essential if the effects of weather events are to be mitigated. Welsh Government introduced the Resilient Rods grant following Storm Dennis to address the resilience of the network to storm events, focussing on routes serving public transport that have traditionally been susceptible to local flooding during storms. This funding has enabled some councils to begin to address some major deficiencies in their highway drainage

networks. Unfortunately, this grant has been subsumed into the Local Transport Fund Grant and reduced in the current financial year.

## 10. Ongoing Deterioration Predicted



### Roads (carriageways)

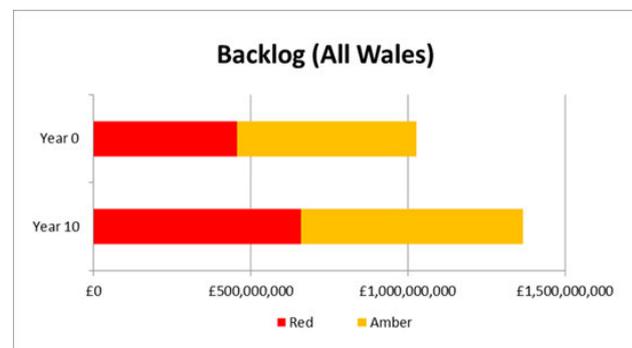
Without the government grant funding investment levels have been approximately £52m pa. This is below the steady state level of £76m pa and the asset overall will be in a state of deterioration. Roads will progressively

deteriorate, creating an increased backlog of roads in need of resurfacing and increasing quantities of pot holes and other defects.

Similar patterns of deterioration will occur within the other asset groups where funding levels are a fraction of that required to prevent them from deteriorating. Current funding levels of all highway asset group are insufficient to prevent ongoing deterioration (increasing backlog).

## 11. Huge Future liability Created

A continuance of current funding levels (assuming no grant funding or similar government funding) will result in the roads (carriageways) backlog increasing such that by the end of 10 years a further £400m of funding would be required to remove the backlog.



Similar increases will occur in all the other asset groups. The assets in need of refurbishment and replacement will increase in number and extent of work required. They will need replacement. As such, a massive funding liability will be created that a future generation will have to pay for.

## 12. Improvement in Condition will Require Increased Funding Levels

The funding levels provided recently are insufficient to maintain the asset in approximately its current state nationally. Some authorities have invested significantly more than steady state levels and been able to improve the condition of some assets

for a short period, whereas others have continually been managing a deteriorating condition. At a national level a significant increase in funding, above those of the last 5 years, would be required if condition is to be improved. If grant funding is not continued an accelerated level of deterioration can be expected. Very significantly increased funding is required to allow authorities to prevent an increase in backlog, associated increase in repair need and the resultant future liability.

### **Summary/Key Points**

1. Highways that are safe and fit for purpose are a prerequisite of every public service.
2. Many highway assets (wholly or in part) are reaching an age and state of deterioration where replacement or refurbishment is required. For most assets deterioration is not visible.
3. Historical underinvestment in road maintenance has led to a very substantial backlog of repair and replacement totalling **£ 2,043 million**
4. The backlog is made up of huge amounts of roads, footways, structures (bridges, walls etc), lighting and other highway assets that need refurbishment or replacement.
5. The dilapidated state of the network means that very large number of reactive repairs are required to keep the roads safe for use.
6. Investment levels over the last 5 years have been £99mpa. 63% of that required to maintain the asset in its current condition.
7. Current funding levels are insufficient to prevent a reversion to a deteriorating state of all asset groups.
8. Rampant cost escalation of materials, labour, fuel, energy together with general inflation will reduce the amount of work that can be commissioned. Hyperinflation is however expected to continue and will exacerbate the problems outlined above.
9. The dilapidated state of the network has made the asset more vulnerable to the effects of weather and extreme storm events. Greater resilience requires enhanced maintenance.
10. Without the government grant funding the asset overall will be in an even more rapid state of deterioration, roads will progressively deteriorate, creating an increased backlog.
11. Over time a massive funding liability will be created that a future generation will have to pay for.

12. The funding levels provided recently are insufficient to maintain the asset in its current state nationally.
13. Very significantly increased funding is required to allow authorities to prevent an increase in backlog, associated need for repair and to prevent creating a massive future liability for future generation to pay for.