

Cross-Party Group Minutes

Meeting Minutes:

Cross Party Group Title:	Public Transport
Date of Meeting:	14.12.21
Location:	Held via Zoom

In attendance:

Members of the Senedd	
Name	Party
Carolyn Thomas (Chair)	Labour
Natasha Ashgar	Conservative
Altaf Hussein	Conservative
Eleri Griffiths (representing Heledd Fychan MS)	Plaid Cymru

External Attendees		
Name	Organisation	Position
Joshua Miles	CPT Cymru	(Secretariat) Director
Jo Foxall	PTI Cymru	
Scott Pearson	Newport Transport	Managing director
David Beer	Transport Focus Wales	Senior Manager Wales
Colin Thomas	Newport Transport Ltd	Commercial & Projects Manager
Jane Reakes Davies	First Cymru Buses Ltd	Managing Director
Lee Robinson	TfW	Director North Wales (Bus)
Christine Boston	Sustrans	Director
Barclay Davies	Bus Users Cymru	Director
Cllr William Powell	Transport Focus	Board Member
Kaarina Ruta	WLGA	
Sian Donovan	Pedal Power	
Peter Kingsbury	Rail Future	

Rhiannon Janeaftery	Community Rail Network	
Rhiannon Hardiman	Living Streets	Wales Manager
Lewis Brencher	TfW	Director Comms
Peter Daniels	Denbighshire CC	
Chris Cheek	2FM	Managing Director
Henry Davies	Office of Huw Irranca-Davies	
Richard Cope	ATCO	Chair
Richard Hoare	Arriva Bus Cymru	
Chris Owens	Alpine Travel	
Martin Murphy	Unite	
Eleri Griffiths	Representing Heledd Fychan MS	

Apologies:

Name:	Title:
Heledd Fychan	Plaid Cymru
Huw Irranca-Davies	Labour
Llyr Huws Gruffydd	Plaid Cymru

Summary of Meeting:

The Chair opened the meeting and explained the importance of the issues to be discussed with the group, highlighting in particular the importance of public transport on Wales' economy and society.

The Chair introduced the two speakers for the discussion. The first to present was David Beer of Transport Focus Wales. David presented on data collected by the organisation in relation to both bus and train services.

David highlighted the concerns passengers had around public health and how this was causing some hesitancy in using public transport. He further noted that survey results showed this hesitancy would be a long term trend with a decline from 26% of bus users pre-pandemic using bus 5 times or more a week to an expected 19.6% post-covid. In relation to rail, 15% of survey respondents suggested they wouldn't use rail in the future.

David's statistics also showed Wales lagging behind Scotland and England in terms of passenger return. He added that the key factors to address were; reassuring customers that it was safe to return, explaining how overcrowding would be dealt with, making cleaning regimes visible, reinforcing Covid-19 rules and consistent up-to-date messaging.

Chris Cheek presented next with a focus on the future sustainability of bus services. He explained the assumptions underpinning his model and the data sources used. He highlighted key changes in certain areas such as the impact of working from home on commuting patterns, the shift to online retail leading to fewer shopping trips and more online teaching reducing student demand.

His model suggests that demand will recover to 89% pre-covid levels by end 2023 and is likely to remain at these levels until 2030 without any other interventions. This would require changes to routes and frequencies to be sustainable. His suggestion was modal shift was the best means of influencing this, with a focus on investment in infrastructure, innovative and dynamic bus operators responding to growth and a lower emission fleet.

The chair thanked the presenters and opened up the floor to questions. The discussion included a focus on interventions that support passenger returns such as the free bus schemes in Swansea and Newport and discounted travel in Cardiff. Tackling congestion and road space reallocation were also highlighted as key priorities for action. Pro-active marketing was considered key and this will be the topic of a future CPG meeting.

The Chair offered to write to the Minister summarising the data and discussion at the meeting.