

National Assembly for Wales

Cross Party Group on Community Transport

Tuesday 23rd of June 2015

Ty Hywel, Dining Room 2

Present: Eluned Parrott AM (Chair), Paul Harding (AM Support Staff), Sian Summers-Rees (CTA Wales), Rhian Higgins (CTA Wales), Ceri Cryer (Age Cymru), Craig Lawson (AM Support Staff, Suzy Davies), Rod Bowen (Dolen Teifi), Sara Leyland Jones (PAVO)

Apologies: Huw Lewis AM, Altaff Hussain AM, Bethan Jenkins AM, Mohammad Asghar AM, Hattie Woakes (North Pembrokeshire Transport Forum).

1. Welcome, introductions & apologies:

Eluned Parrott AM (EP) opened the meeting by asking members to introduce themselves and thanked everyone for their attendance.

Apologies received as detailed above.

2. Minutes of the meeting 24th March 2015

Minutes were approved.

3. Matters arising

Following the last meeting CTA Wales received notification regarding their funding and BSSG which superseded the need for EP to raise a question in the chamber/write to the Minister. Siân Summers-Rees (SSR) noted however that there remained a concern regarding the uncertainty of BSSG next year and the delays over administration in the current year e.g. North Wales CTO's had not received decisions regarding their funding until end of the first quarter. SSR also noted that the interpretation of eligibility, process and payments of BSSG was different across the Local Authorities areas and as a result there was a great deal of disparity.

ACTION - Eluned Parrott AM to raise a question regarding BSSG funding for 2016/2017.

4. Engagement with Local CT Schemes

At the last meeting it was agreed that CTA Wales would focus their engagement with Assembly Members over the summer months through facilitating opportunities for them to meet with CT providers within their constituencies.

SSR noted that CTA Wales had contacted AM's inviting them to visit their local CT scheme in order to glean a better understanding of the work currently undertaken within the community. Positive responses to date have been minimal. EP suggested that CT schemes should contact their AM directly rather than going through CTA Wales.

Action- It was agreed that CTA should encourage CT schemes to contact their AM's directly inviting them visit the relevant scheme within their constituency.

5. Programme of open meetings:-

"What does the future of Community Transport look like?"

SSR opened with a presentation on Community Transport and what its future could look like. The opportunities and future challenges were also identified within the presentation and Rod Bowen (RB) (Development Officer for Dolen Teifi) and Sarah Leyland-Jones (SLJ), (Community Transport Development officer for PAVO) contributed to the discussions.

RB gave examples of how Dolen Teifi has attempted to positively overcome D1 licencing issues for CT drivers through the purchase of new minibus light options. He also spoke about the successful volunteer recruitment programme implemented as part of the 'Transport for All' project funded through the Big Lottery People and Places programme. Volunteer recruitment has been a positive experience for this project due to the ongoing engagement with the wider third sector who can also benefit from using the transport. Volunteering remains a challenge for a number of CT schemes and this example has the potential to be rolled out a best practice model.

SLJ advised the group on how PAVO has successfully supported CT organisations in North Wales to deliver Non-Emergency Patient Transport Services (NEPTS) on behalf of Welsh Ambulance Service NHS Trust (WAST). The project has alleviated the current pressures on WAST whilst providing better access for the community. SLJ noted that to date the project had been very successful, again this has the scope for further development throughout Wales.

Open discussions noted that there was an unrealistic expectation that CT will deliver bus services which have already been proven to be unviable by commercial companies without additional subsidies. It was also noted that the lack of subsidy for 'dead mileage' was a particular problem for CT operations in rural areas. EP queried whether CT schemes were willing to take on NEPTS work and whether there was a concern that this would take them away from delivery of their traditional services. Both SLJ and RB noted that some CT organisations may have trustees who were reluctant to take on NEPTS, however from their perspective they felt it was important for organisations to take on work which would increase their financial sustainability in the longer term. Further considerations centred on

the financial reimbursement/subsidies needed for CT and the concern that longer-term sustainability was going to be increasingly difficult.

It was agreed that the next meeting would focus on 'CT and its Transport to Health role'

6. A.O.B:

The draft National Transport Plan for Wales was published earlier this year and the consultation process ended in March. SSR expressed some disappointment that CT provision and transport accessibility did not figure more prominently within the draft plan. It was noted that whilst the CT sector would welcome the further development of car sharing schemes it was not CT in the traditional sense; the sector would have welcomed inclusion of CT operations such as community car schemes.

Date of next meeting:

Date to be confirmed.