# Economy, Infrastructure & Skills Committee Enquiry:

## Impacts of Congestion on the Bus Industry in Wales, June 2017

## Submission of Stagecoach in South Wales

- **How does congestion affect the bus sector in Wales and how does this compare to other parts of the UK?**

The tabulation below (fig. 1) illustrates journey speeds for a selection of Stagecoach services from 1995 to 2015. There has been a general decline in speed of 2mph (13%) which has resulted in an increase in resource of 6 buses (+26%) in the same time period, required to provide the same level of service.

| Stagecoach in South Wales | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Congestion review | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | 1995/96 at Traffic Patterns | | | | | 2005/06 at Traffic Patterns | | | | | 2015/16 at Current Traffic Patterns | | | | | Notes |
| Service | Origin | Destination | Frequency | Round Trip Time | PVR | Miles per round trip | Miles Per Hour | Frequency | Round Trip Time | PVR | Miles per round trip | Miles Per Hour | Frequency | Round Trip Time | PVR | Miles per round trip | Miles Per Hour | |
| 50 | Bargoed | Newport | 30 | 150 | 5 | 44.1 | 17.7 | 30 | 180 | 6 | 44.1 | 14.7 | 20 | 200 | 10 | 44.1 | 13.2 | |
| 56 | Blackwood | Newport | 60 | 105 | 1.8 | 27.1 | 15.5 | 60 | 105 | 1.8 | 27.1 | 15.5 | 20 | 120 | 6 | 27.1 | 13.6 | 1 |
| X3 | Pontypool | Cardiff | 60 | 120 | 2 | 46.4 | 23.2 | 60 | 130 | 2.2 | 46.4 | 21.4 | 30 | 150 | 5 | 46.4 | 18.5 | |
| 122 Off-Pk | Tonypandy | Cardiff | 60 | 180 | 3 | 45.2 | 15.1 | 30 | 180 | 6 | 45.2 | 15.1 | 20 | 180 | 9 | 45.2 | 15.1 | |
| 122 Peak | Tonypandy | Cardiff | 60 | 180 | 3 | 45.2 | 15.1 | 30 | 180 | 6 | 45.2 | 15.1 | 20 | 202 | 10.1 | 45.2 | 13.4 | |
| 132 Off-Pk | Maerdy | Cardiff | 30 | 210 | 7 | 49.0 | 14.0 | 30 | 240 | 8 | 49.0 | 12.2 | 12 | 228 | 19 | 49.0 | 12.9 | |
| 132 Peak | Maerdy | Cardiff | 30 | 210 | 7 | 49.0 | 14.0 | 30 | 240 | 8 | 49.0 | 12.2 | 12 | 240 | 20 | 49.0 | 12.2 | |
| X24 Off-Pk | Blaenavon | Newport | 60 | 113 | 1.9 | 33.6 | 17.9 | 15 | 120 | 8 | 33.6 | 16.8 | 10 | 130 | 13 | 33.6 | 15.5 | |
| X24 Peak | Blaenavon | Newport | 60 | 113 | 1.9 | 33.6 | 17.9 | 10 | 110 | 11 | 33.6 | 18.3 | 10 | 130 | 13 | 33.6 | 15.5 | |
| | | **Total** | | **1381** | **32.5** | **373.2** | **16.2** | **Total** | **1485** | **56.9** | **373.2** | **15.1** | | **1580** | **105.1** | **373.2** | **14.2** | |
| | | **Change** | | | | | | | | | | | | **199** | **72.6** | **0.0** | **-2.0** | |
| | | **Change** | | | | | | | | | | | | **14%** | **223%** | **0%** | **-13%** | |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| X4/T4 | Merthyr Tydfil | Cardiff | 30 | | | | | 15 | 120 | 8 | 49.7 | 24.9 | 10 | 140 | 14 | 49.7 | 21.3 | 2 |
| 26 | Blackwood | Cardiff | | | | | | 120 | 180 | 1.5 | 40.7 | 13.6 | 30 | 180 | 6 | 40.7 | 13.6 | 3 |
| A | Caerphilly | Cardiff | | | | | | 60 | 120 | 2 | 19.8 | 9.9 | 60 | 120 | 2 | 19.8 | 9.9 | 3 |
| B | Caerphilly | Cardiff | | | | | | 60 | 120 | 2 | 19.8 | 9.9 | 60 | 120 | 2 | 19.8 | 9.9 | 3 |
| 151 | Blackwood | Newport | | | | | | 30 | 120 | 4 | 29.7 | 14.9 | 10 | 120 | 12 | 29.7 | 14.9 | 3 |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Note 1 | Glyn Williams ran short journeys, Stagecoach ran long journeys prior to 2006 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Note 2 | No 1995 data | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Note 3 | Not operated by Stagecoach in 1995 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

Figure 1: The impact of congestion on journey time and bus resource in South Wales.
Bus passenger journeys are now longer and slower due to the increase in car traffic over the years in question.

The private car has generated travel demand since mass production and personal wealth increased in the post war years (TAS Bus Industry Monitor). Department for Transport statistics show that cars have also increased their share of journeys made – at the expense of other modes:

- In the early 1950's bus and coach services accounted for **42%** of vehicle journeys while private cars, vans and taxis accounted for only **27%**; but
- by 2015 cars vans and taxis accounted for **82.9%** of vehicle journeys; bus and coach **5%**.

Indeed, DfT statistics show that much of the modal shift from bus to car occurred prior to the deregulation of local buses in October 1986.

There were 16,455 million journeys on street running public transport (bus, tram and trolleybus) in 1952. Bus passenger journeys:

- halved to 8,153 million in **1971**; and
- halved again to 4,500 million in **1994**; before
- increasing again to 5,104 million in **2016**.

Car ownership in Wales – since 1986 – has been the 3rd highest across Great Britain. Only Scotland and the North East of England have logged higher increases in car ownership. Since 1996, the number of licensed cars in Wales has increased by **51%** to reach **1,527,100** at the end of 2016. In recent years, much of the increase in car ownership has been driven by new financial products offered by the automotive industry. The increase in Personal Contract Plans – **59%** of new car sales in the 12 months to July 2015 (705,000 cars) were purchased this way[1] – as a means to buy cars has resulted in a surge of car sales following the 2008 recession.

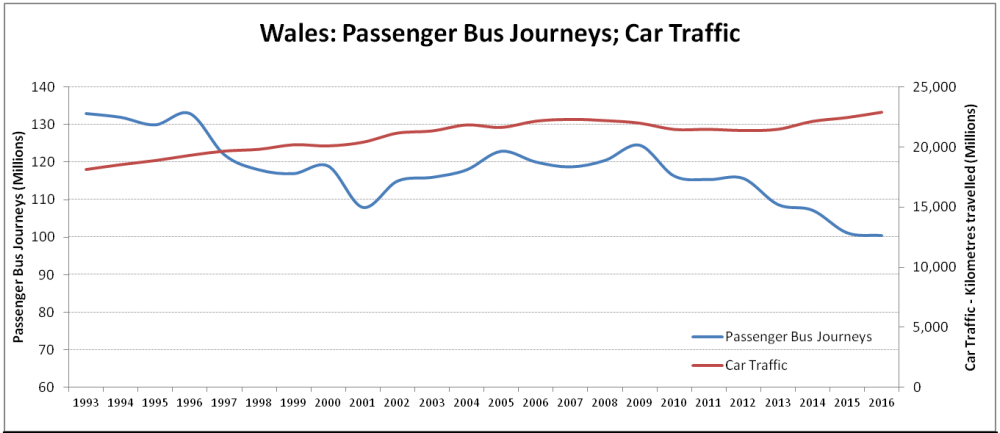
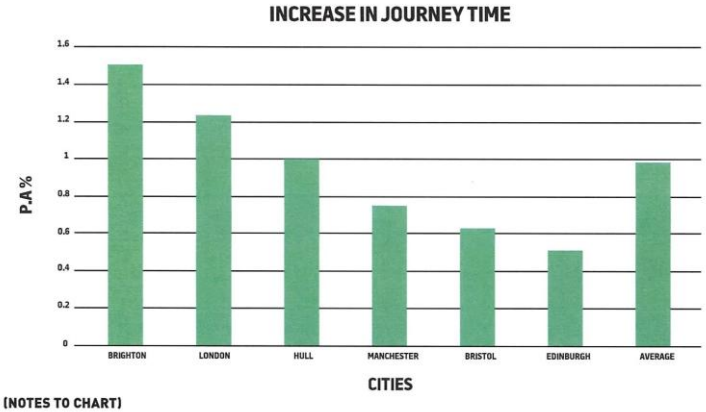



Fig 2: Passenger bus journeys v increase in car traffic.

[1] http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-34383082

**A. BUS JOURNEY TIMES ARE INCREASING**

**The trend in bus journey times is an increase of between 0.5% and 1.5% per-annum - for city wide services (daily average) over the past 30 years,** with an average increase of 0.98% per annum for the six case studies as shown in as shown in chart below.




**(NOTES TO CHART)**

Fig 0.98% p.a Increase in average bus journey times.

Data covers 1986-2006 except for:

Brighton: 2008-2016. The south coast town has experienced a sharp increase in congestion levels.

London: 2003/4 (from peak levels just after congestion charging) to 2015/16. It covers central, inner and outer London

[1] **The TAS Partnership:**

In their choice of transport, customers consider journey time to be an important factor. Slower bus journeys are less attractive which act to depress demand and revenue. Due to the increase in congestion caused by increase in car usage in South Wales, this has acted to increase resource by 26% (1995-2015) in order to provide the same level of service. It is therefore significantly more expensive to provide the same level of service due to slower speeds, less productivity and a lack of compensatory bus priority measures. The additional costs placed upon the industry by traffic congestion increases the cost of travel which acts to deter passenger travel, depressing revenue and so placing greater reliance on revenue support for marginal services.

Slower journeys that are less productive use more fuel and are a greater polluter than faster, more efficient journeys. Burning more fuel comes at a greater cost to the operator, which is passed on to the customer.

There is a negative impact on economic growth due to the higher cost of travel and the unattractive nature of longer journeys.

Comparisons to the rest of the UK can be seen in the image to the left, taken from Prof. David Begg's report to Greener Journeys. The full text can be found at the link below:
http://www.greenerjourneys.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/Prof-David-Begg-The-Impact-of-Congestion-on-Bus-Passengers-Digital-FINAL.pdf

- **How should policy be improved to address the impact of congestion on the bus sector?**

Welsh Government and local authorities are not using all of the full extent of existing powers: car parking policy, planning policy and highway strategy. There have been too few substantive and effective initiatives that curb the use of the private car over the bus in these policy areas.

Effective policies are required utilising Section 8.4.6 of the Planning Policy for Wales. This highlights that local authorities have the power to introduce workplace parking levys, however no such schemes have been introduced. The local authority may also, through planning applications, limit parking availability. Parking levy's provide a source of passenger transport revenue funding, as Nottingham City Council have introduced.

As customer journeys cross bureaucratic boundaries the Local Transport Plan must be coordinated with adjoining and other regional authorities in order to provide the most effective, productive highway network. There is a risk that political divergence between authorities must not be allowed to water down an effective LTP.

This is not about new policies, but about using current policies more effectively – limit car parking, introduce car parking levys, increase bus priority measures, introduce "soft-nudge" tactics (for example, in addition to public transport information, advise car drivers of the limited availability of parking spaces, congestion affect on the journey time and air pollution levels should form part of the information mix for car drivers).

Planning policy should be further strengthened to restrict applications that do not favour the bus as a mode of transport and act to generate more car journeys. Typically, edge-of-town and out-of-town retail centres detract from bus use and act to increase car journeys. They also detract from a sustainable and vibrant high street and town centre.

Increasing the amount of capital funding available for bus priority schemes to give the bus an advantage over the car which will help to attract new users from their cars and reduce congestion. Increasing bus service sustainability will reduce Local Authority revenue support requirements.

- **Whether congestion has an impact on the need for public subsidy of bus services in Wales**

The increase in cost of passenger transport due to increased congestion deters customers, both in terms of cost and journey length, for those services operating at the margin the risk to local authority purse increases requiring revenue support to maintain service levels. Concessionary reimbursement is based on revenue foregone as cash fares increase to cover costs, the cost of the concessionary scheme also increases.

As journey speeds slow, and productivity decreases this has an overall negative effect on the local economy, deterring new employment sites and potentially reducing business rates, employment levels, social and economic exclusion. This all comes at a cost to the local authority's revenue budget restricting expenditure passenger transport including the passenger waiting environment.

Increased capital available for bus priority measures will help to address concerns over lengthening bus journey times with the potential for working in partnership to reduce revenue costs by improving bus productivity and reducing running costs. This further acts to attract new custom and revenue, making services more sustainable, fewer marginal services.

## Your name/organisation and postal/email address

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