

Public Transport In Blaenau Gwent

We trade from Ebbw Vale Town Centre so below are the difficulties we are experiencing.
All Blaenau Gwent Town Centres are subject to be same problems.

Background Information.

Public Transport

We have been Campaigning about the Poor Public Transport System in Blaenau Gwent since March 2018

Economic Regeneration (Town Centres)

And have been trying to engage with Blaenau Gwent Council, Welsh Assembly Government and all the groups listed below concerning Regeneration (Town Centres) since 2016.

Below are the areas where the poor Public Transport Services have a impact on the residents of Blaenau Gwent:

Regeneration Town Centre

Since the cuts in Public Transport Services in March 2018 there has been a decline in footfall / customers of between 50% - 60%.

This has resulted in the subsequent drop in trade and retail takings.

This has exasperated the already difficult trading conditions that bricks and mortar are already experiencing.

There is now only 1 bus an hour entering Ebbw Vale Town Centre.

This has resulted in a number of Retail Outlets having to decide as to whether it is Economic to continue trading. A number of Retail Outlets will not be renewing their lease when they expire.

As a example Ebbw Vale has over 70+ retail and service businesses which employ 300+ people.

Economic Regeneration

There are a number of WAG government Departments, local government departments, Boards, Groups etc. involved in regeneration within Blaenau Gwent:

Blaenau Gwent Council Economic Regeneration Department

Tech Valley

Valleys Taskforce

Blaenau Gwent Enterprise Board

Town Centre Regeneration Taskforce

LDP (Local Development Plan)

RDP (Regional Development Plan)

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Plus many other.....

All of the above identify in their policy documents Public Transport as a fundamental building block in the Economic Regeneration of Blaenau Gwent. None of the above have been able to supply a plan or strategy to improve Public Transport in Blaenau Gwent.

Public Health

Residents especially the ageing population need to regularly attend Hospital, Doctor, Dentist, Eye and other appointments. This is very difficult and in some cases impossible. This is going to be a real concern when the new hospital is completed in Llanfrechfa (Cwmbran).

Education

Students attending Schools and Colleges and who do not qualify for free transport are regularly late and miss lessons due to the poor and unreliable Public Transport System.

Other Services

The ability to access any public services via public transport examples below:

Probation Service clients are unable to make appointments resulting in problems.

Citizens Advice Service.

Blaenau Gwent Housing Departments.

Housing Associations.

Loneliness Isolation

Residents especially the older generation are now prisoners in their own home. This leads to loneliness, a feeling of isolation and depression.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-42255234>

Jobs Employment

The poor public transport within Blaenau Gwent has resulted in residents who work within and out of the area and do not own their own car unable to get to their place of work with the subsequent loss of their job.

It also makes their chance of finding employment impossible as there is no way they can travel to their place of employment.

Green Agenda Global Warming

The Welsh Assembly Government have been promoting the use of Public Transport as a means of reducing carbon emissions by getting people / commuters to leave their cars at home and use Public Transport. I would say this is impossible as there is no Public Transport within Blaenau Gwent.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-politics-50490158>

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Reliability of Existing Public Transport

There is a problem with the reliability of services with Buses regularly not turning up and if they do turn up they regularly break down on route.

There is also the problem of Bus Capacity once buses become full the service leaves passengers at subsequent stops. In some cases the service skips remaining stops on the route.

The buses used in this area are buses that were deemed unfit for use in other parts of the country, but are suitable for the residents in Blaenau Gwent.

We have also raised concerns that the road worthiness of the buses could result in a serious accident.

Blaenau Gwent Council

We have raised our concerns with Blaenau Gwent Council and have managed to have 2 meetings.

We have tried to engage meet with the Council on a number of occasions and our requests have been ignored.

Welsh Assembly Government

We have also raised our Public Transport problems with WAG.

Our AM (Alun Davies) and MP (Nick Smith)

We have also raised the Public Transport problems with our MP (Nick Smith) and AM (Alun Davies) this has resulted in a couple of meetings, but as of yet no action or help.

Trains

There is no bus service links to the Train Stations and no alignment of timetables.

The link between Ebbw Vale Train Station is via a Cable Car (Funicular). This is often out of action and not available over the weekends.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-south-east-wales-43983578>

The rolling stock is also old and was deemed unfit for use in other parts of the country but suitable for the residents in Blaenau Gwent.

The train service is also poor with limited carriages which results in commuters packed in like sardines.

Commuters also have the problem of not being able to board the train for their commute to work.

There is also the line duelling / upgrade which seems to have stopped.

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Other Actions:

We have also contacted the following groups organisations on a number of occasions via telephone and email with no response or reply.

TFW (Transport for Wales)

<https://tfwrail.wales/homepage>

Bus Users Wales

<https://bususers.org/wales/>

Community Buses Wales

<https://ctauk.org>

<https://ctauk.org/connecting-communities-in-wales/>