**Fforwm Rhanbarthol y Canolbarth a’r Gorllewin TrC | TfW Mid and South West Regional Forum**

**07 December 2021**



**Adroddiad o’r cyfarfod**

**Meeting report**

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Mid and West Wales Regional Stakeholder Forum

The forum met on the 08 September 2021, 10:00 – 12:00

**Attendees**

**Forum Members**

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| Hatti Woakes | North Pembrokeshire Transport Forum |
| Richard Whiting | Community Rail, Transport for Wales |
| Stuart Cole | Heart of Wales Line |
| Peter Austin | Stakeholder Engagement Manager, Swansea Bay City Deal |
| Evie Redford | South West Wales Connect |
| Paul Beecham |  |
| Ann Elias | Mid Wales Regional Engagement Team, Ceredigion Council |
| Jane Jones | Head of Public Affairs, GWR |
| Wendy Abel | Tourism Officer with Powys County Council |
| Liz Williams | Projects and Office Manager, Pembrokeshire Tourism |
| Tegryn Jones | Chief Executive Pembrokeshire National Park |
| Geraint Morgan | Community Rail Manager, Transport for Wales |

**Transport for Wales -** Other members of the TfW team were present to facilitate

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| Tomos Davies (Clerk) | Community Engagement Officer, Mid & West Wales | 10.00-10.05 |
| Lewis Breacher | Director of Communications and Engagement | 10.05-10.20 |
| Andrew Sherrington | Fflecsi Team | 10.20-10.40 |
| Jeremy Morgan | Head of Corporate Governance | 10.40-11.00 |
| Victoria Madelin | Governance Advisor |  |
| Andrew Gainsbury | Rolling Stock Strategy Manager • Service Delivery | 11.00-11.20 |
| Geraint Stanley | Customer Experience Project Manager | 11.20-11.45 |
| Jamie Warner | Community Engagement Officer | 11.45-11:55 |

**Apologies**

|  |  |
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| David Bailey | Transport Focus |

**Note from the Chair, Alex Bryant-Evans**

1. “I would like to thank all of our members for attending our seventh Mid and West Wales regional Forum. This is my first forum as Interim Stakeholder Manager and welcome you all here. Within today’s forum, I’d like to give thanks to our presenters who provided updates on the fflecsi buses, transparency and governance within Transport for Wales, Active Travel Modified Class 153 Carriages, Sgwrs and the new train mock-up visitor centre. Alongside these insightful presentations from our partners, members had the opportunity to participate in a Q&A session with Lewis Breacher, Director of Communications and Engagement for Transport for Wales. I would like to give thanks to members who further contributed to this Q&A session. Thank you for your time and invaluable contributions to our forum.”

**Agenda**

1. **Introduction & Apologies**

Alex Bryant-Evans welcomed the forum members to the seventh meeting of the Mid and West Wales regional Forum. Alex introduced the format of the meeting and the guest speakers and thanked attendees for attending his first forum as Interim Stakeholder Manager. Alex addressed current travel restrictions due to Storm Barra and Welsh Government guidance still in place across Wales in respect of the Covid-19 pandemic.

1. **Question Time**

**Lewis Breacher, Director of Communications. TfW**

Lewis Breacher, Director of Communications and Engagement (TfW), highlighted the current emergency timetable due to Storm Barra and outlined the challenges to Storm Arwen. He stated there were 40 incidents and 1 derailment due to the storm along with uprooted trees across the Welsh network. Stuart Cole stated that due to storm, trains did not turn up and there was a shortage of trains and asked whether this caused more gaps in rural service? Lewis stated that 153 train impacted by storm Arwen. Andrew Gainsbury stated that although no derailment happened with 153 trains, they are not fitted with slide rails which impacts how they operate with leaf falling on track. Stuart Cole asked what happens in winter, is there a short-term fix? Andrew Gainsbury stated that there was a programme to install slide rails on 153s to alleviate this issue. Richard Whiting stated that due to the nature of the HOWL, we will have issues as it is a rural service. He asked when there were planned cancellations due to railway maintenance etc, the bus replacements were insufficient and late, leaving stranded passengers. Does TfW have any plans on improving bus replacements for HOWL? Lewis stated there was a case for using smaller community transport to get passengers around the rural mid Wales roads. He stated that TfW were exploring options for smaller community transport buses and improving communication.

1. **fflecsi/Demand Response Transport pilots**

**Andrew Sherrington, fflecsi Team, Transport for Wales**

Andrew Sherrington introduced the fflecsi pilot programme. <https://www.fflecsi.wales> He stated there were currently 11 pilots, including Bwcabws and Pembrokeshire in Mid and West Wales as well as Blaenau Gwent and Newport amongst others using 29 vehicles across Wales. He stated that it was a point-to-point service with virtual stops as well as standard stops. He stated that each fflecsi works differently to support local needs and was a demand led responsive service with passengers able to pre book or on demand. Andrew outlined the services available in mid and west Wales, stating that TfW recently took over the Bwcabws service which took passengers in North Carmarthen and South Ceredigion. He stated that the Pembrokeshire fflecsi bus had 350 riders a week and approximately 10 new people register for the service a week. It had an 85% demand rate arriving within 10 minutes to service. He stated the reason why it wasn’t 90% was because of the rural nature of the service and size of the area the fflecsi covered. He stated that fflecsi had made a difference as it was developed with an App to enable passengers to book their buses alongside traditional phone services. He stated that initial research has indicated that there was a big uptake in older people using the App to book journeys. Hatti Woakes stated that she was supportive of community transport but mobile phone signal in rural areas was a problem and asked what factors TfW were bring in to counter these issues. Andrew stated that fflecsi works along other community transport providers and stated that fflecsi tailored their service to passengers. Tegryn Jones asked about whether the last slide was whether fflecsi was meeting 92% of demand? Andrew confirmed this and stated that this was based on whether fflecsi could meet service demand within 30 minutes of call. Tegryn followed up by asking what TfW had done TfW had done to promote fflecsi and other rural public transport in the area? Andrew stated that what publicity TfW could do was impacted by Covid 19, limiting face to face promotion for example, however, he hoped that TfW would be able to further promote the service in new year. Lewis Brencher stated that work marketing and promoting services had been impacted due to Covid 19, however, TfW were currently looking to further promote fflecsi alongside the Traws Cymru T1 service which will be Wales’ first integrated bus and rail service. A high-profile marketing campaign integrating public transport including fflecsi and train will be launched in new year. Stuart Cole stated that integrating with other bus companies not easy, Bwcabws and T1 easier, but was very supportive of fflecsi.

1. **Transparency, Governance and information provision Changes**

**Jeremy Morgan, Head of Corporate Governance, TfW and Victoria Madelin, Governance Advisor**

Victoria Madelin introduced TfW’s transparency agenda. She stated that as a publicly funded body, TfW is committed to demonstrating openness and transparency in the way we operate our business and how we communicate with our customers and stakeholders. Transparency vital to public sector organisations, making them accountable, fair, and inclusive. TfW committed to the 7 principles of public life and being open and transparent. TfW are looking to develop a Transparency Plan outlining our transparency. It has a website outlining how we work and how we operate and have a publication scheme outlining its business plan, annual report, KPIs and other documents in the public’s interest. Victoria and Jeremy outlined the KPI’s and how they are measured and reported. Richard Whiting asked how TfW were capturing passengers’ experiences in real life? Lewis stated that TfW obtain feedback from several sources and was happy to talk about this offline. Hatti wished to be included on this too.

Further information on our transparency agenda can be found here: <https://tfw.wales/transparency>

1. **Active Travel Modified Class 153 Carriages**

**Andrew Gainsbury, Rolling Stock Strategy Manager • Service Delivery, TfW**

Andrew Gainsbury introduced and outlined the Active Travel Modified Class 153 Carriages. He outlined that the active travel carriages aimed to improve services to the HOWL by introducing specialised 16 153 active travel carriages to the line, building on Scot Rail active travel services in Scotland. The aim of the carriages is to increase cycling, hiking and tourism on the HOWL. He stated that TfW have already consulted with various stakeholders’ groups and organisations on the HOWL and open to comments. Hatti Woakes asked whether there were any plans for this to be rolled out on other lines, for example in Pembrokeshire? Andrew stated that the modified 153s were designated to the HOWL and stated that new 197s have sufficient cycle space. Stuart Cole asked how do we deal with active travel if on 150s? Andrew stated that 153s will be in service not 150s as the 150s are being phased out. Stuart asked whether there will be enough modified 153s to cover service. Andrew confirmed that there will be 6 trains to cover service. Stuart stated that it shouldn’t be about diverting the 6 trains to the HOWL but looking at other sets of carriages. Concern for trains being diverted from HOWL to service other areas. Andrew hoped this would be a step change to rolling out elsewhere.

1. **Virtual Customer Panel**

**Geraint Stanley, Customer Experience Project Manager (TfW)**

Geraint Stanley introduced on a new virtual customer panel, Sgwrs, which draws out qualitative feedback on TfW Services from customers to improve and deliver TfW services. This was a new recently launched initiative will be a representative panel involving 1000 participants involving customers and non-customers in Wales and the borders. The aim of Sgwrs is to test new ideas, shape campaigns and products and identify new areas where TfW should be involved in. Participants in Sgwrs would be able to enter free prize draws for participating as a reward for their time. We have 200 people signed up so far. We will use Sgwrs to gather quantitative and qualitative surveys tailored to the participants based on their demographics, age etc. so we can understand customer needs and views. Stuart stated concerns on panels that ideas don’t get taken forward. How do you move panel members into thinking of ideas that work – do you have mechanism for this? Geraint stated that TfW working with market research company tailoring objective and research and deliverables and what they are looking to achieve. An idea would be built on this. Lewis stated that TfW already use customer insight to develop marketing campaigns but not pool of people. We use UGovUK survey to for example on face covering to test impact and behaviour. We can use Sgwrs to consistently develop effective messaging in future and more efficiently. Paul Beecham asked whether subgroups such as older people and cyclists can be targeted. Geraint stated that this could be done. Panels would be targeted per profile, for example, older people, students, young mothers etc to undertake specific questions for their views and experiences. Stuart stated that he was pleased that non users would be part of panel and their views counted.

For more information on Sgwrs, please visit: <https://tfw.wales/info-for/communities/sgwrs-customer-panel>

1. **New rolling stock ‘mock-up’ visits at Taff’s Well**

**Jamie Warner, Community Engagement Officer (TfW)**

Jamie Warner introduced and gave an overview of the Taff’s Well train mock-ups visitor centre which have recently opened to show the new life sized TfW trains that will be operating throughout Wales in the coming year. He stated that the mock-ups and trains will be available to be viewed by members of the public from early 2022. Visitors will be able to view and familiarise themselves with the new trains, for example, the new 197 ‘Civity’ units which will be introduced in mid Wales to service for example, Pembroke Dock, Milford Haven, Carmarthen and Swansea as well as further Transport for Wales plans. He stated that TfW are developing written and visual materials for the visitor centre and welcome visits from groups from the start of 2022. The train mock-up visitor centre will be open for the next 18 months, until Autumn 2022 and meet all current Covid 19 regulations. Hattie Woakes asked whether the PowerPoint presentation of the new trains could be shared? Alex Bryant-Evans stated that all presentations would be shared after the meeting, however, he stated that they should not be shared widely and presented in the way they were presented. Lowri Joyce asked Hatti to e-mail Alex for more information. Stuart Cole reiterated that the trains were worth visiting. Jamie encouraged visitors to the centre to ensure they get a good feel of the new trains in 2022.

1. **AOB**

Alex Bryant-Evans highlighted various Transport Wales updates, consultations and campaigns. He reiterated TfW’s continuing safer travel message due to Covid 19, including the need to wear a mask and planning your journey. He stated that as this is our last forum of the year, and 12 months on from the last such survey; TfW were keen to hear from you your views on these forums, the format and approach etc. we’ll be proving you with a chance to complete the survey (which should only take a few mins to complete). <https://www.menti.com/mkm45sqdwr/0>. He also updated the forum of the new TfW App <https://tfw.wales/ways-to-travel/rail/buy-tickets/app> which is now operational as well as the Welsh Government’s draft budget which will be published before Christmas and the National Transport Delivery Programme will align with those budgets. He stated that there will then be a 12-week period of public consultation will be held after the local government elections in May 2022.

## Actions

The actions below were raised during the forum and will be addressed prior to the next Regional Forum where possible.

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| **Action** | **What will be done?** |
| None |  |

* Contact TfW Community Engagement Team - [engagement@tfw.wales](file:///C:/Users/TomosDavies/Downloads/engagement@tfw.wales)

## Next Regional Stakeholder Forum

The next Mid and West Wales Regional Stakeholder Forum is scheduled for March 2022. The meeting will be held virtually over the Microsoft Teams platform between 10:00 – 12:00.