# Fforwm Rhanbarthol Rhanddeiliaid — Gogledd a Canolbarth Cymru

# North and Mid Wales — Regional Stakeholder Forum

# 28 June 2022



# Adroddiad o’r cyfarfod

# Meeting Report

North and Mid Wales Regional Stakeholder Forum

The forum met on the 28th of June, 10:02 – 12:09 (via Microsoft Teams)

**Attendees**

## Forum Members

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Andrew Saunders (AS) | Surface Access Strategy Manager, Manchester Airport  |
| Ann Elias (AE) | Ceredigion Council, Mid Wales Regional Engagement Team – Strategic Transport, Highways & Environmental Services   |
| Corinna James (CJ) | Welsh Government, Head of Transport Planning and Appraisal  |
| David Dawkins (DD) | Policy advisor Community Transport Association Wales  |
| Haf Jones (HJ) | Senior Community Development & Engagement Officer, Conwy Council  |
| Iwan Williams (IW) | Bangor University  |
| Ian Nellist (IN) | Federation of Small Businesses  |
| Karen Williams (KW) | Conwy Valley Rail Partnership, Community Rail Officer  |
| Michelle Roles (MR) | Transport Focus  |
| Nick Smith (NS) | Senior Regional Growth Manager, Avanti  |
| Peter Daniels (PD) | Transport Officer Denbighshire Council  |
| Rebecca Johnson (RJ) | Welsh Government Head of Transport Strategy  |
| Rhian Wyn Williams (RWW) | Gwynedd Council Transport Officer  |
| Rob Jones (RJ)  | Coleg Cambria Wrexham, Yale, Bersham Road and Llysfasi campuses  |
| Sarah Reardon (SR) | Network Rail Lead Strategic Planner – Wales & Borders  |
| Sean Croshaw (SC) | Strategic Rail Manager, TfGM  |
| Val Hawkins (VH) | Mid Wales Tourism  |

## Transport for Wales

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Adam Terry (AT) | Head of Operational Planning |
| Alex Chung | Community Engagement Officer (South Wales) |
| Alexander Bryant-Evans | Stakeholder Manger |
| Andy Holder | NTDP (National Transport Delivery Programme) Lead |
| Colin Lea | Planning and Performance Director |
| Elise Jackson | Community Engagement Officer (North and Mid Wales) |
| Gail Jones (GJ) (Chair) | Stakeholder Manger (North and Mid Wales) |
| Helen Dale | Stakeholder Manger |
| James Lendrum | Correspondence Coordinator  |
| James Price | Chief Executive TFW (Transport for Wales)  |
| Jane Purdie (JP) | Coms Business Partner (Bus) |
| Jessica Clement | Community Engagement Officer (South Wales) |
| Kelsey Barcenilla | Stakeholder Manger (Cardiff Bay) |
| Laura Kendrick | Communications Business Partner (North Wales) |
| Lewis Brencher | Communications and Engagement Director |
| Lowri Joyce | Head of Community and Stakeholder Engagement |
| Nichole Sarra | Stakeholder Manger (The Borders) |
| Paula Bowen | Community Engagement Officer (The Borders) |
| Ross Whiting | Community Engagement Officer (South Wales) |
| Tomos Davies | Community Engagement Officer (West Wales) |

# Agenda

## Introductions

**Gail Jones, Stakeholder Manager North Wales (Chair), Transport for Wales**

Gail Jones (GJ) Stakeholder Manager for Mid and North Wales and Chair of the meeting welcomed everyone to the forum and advised attendees on the forum’s housekeeping rules, TfW’s latest travel safer message and the forum agenda. GJ also advised attendees that the meeting would be recorded. There were no objections to this. GJ then welcomed and handed over the forum to TfW CEO James Price (JP)

## James Price, Chief Executive, TfW (Transport for Wales) – Company Overview and Q&A

James Price (JP) who introduced himself to the forum members. James said that although he welcomes the opportunity to meet virtually, he is keen to see forums hosted in person in the future. He also welcomed the opportunity during the forum to hear from and gain essential insights from the forum members.

JP supplied an overview of the recent RMT (Rail, Maritime, and Transport) industrial action which affected TfW rail services. Customers had been understanding of the situation and we have received positive feedback, particularly around communications and updates in response to the recent industrial action.

JP said that the industrial action inevitably had an impact on TfW’s covid recovery plan. There has been a slight knock back on our figures it has also affected active travel. He signposted forum members to our recovery campaign toolkit.

JP touched on the recent incident in Craven Arms, where an attempt had been made to steal two mini diggers from a builder's yard next to the railway line. The thieves abandoned the mini diggers on the railway line, and the diggers were hit by a TfW train travelling 60MPH. There were passengers on board the train, but thankfully there were no casualties. All passengers and staff were rescued from the scene safely. TfW staff have received thanks and praise from the passengers for their quick actions following the collision. The impact of the Collison resulted in significant fire damage to the two leading units, with minor damage to the third (all class 150). The line was shut for a day whilst investigations and rescue efforts were underway. This incident continues to have an impact on our stock availability; however, we are working hard to repair the damaged carriages and reintroduce them into service.

JP reported on overcrowding of the border's services, particularly at weekends, where passenger figures have been greater than pre-covid. The Marches line represented a challenge for us, particularly when other Train Operating Companies (TOC’s) reduced their services on these lines, however many of these have now been reinstated which has eased overcrowding. (JP) advised that TfW are working with Network Rail and our partners to improve the resilience of the network.

Michele Roles (MS) thanked TfW for the information distributed in respect of the recent RMT industrial action. She felt that TFW had been responsive and made the messaging around the industrial action and its impact on customers very clear. Mystery shoppers at Llandudno and Swansea stations had provided positive feedback on how TfW staff had dealt with enquires.

JP discussed customer feedback around train capacity for the large events, such as the recent high-profile concerts in Cardiff. He advised that we are actively exploring ways in which we can help alleviate capacity issues during such events, including introducing a supplementary coach service on busy event days. We will keep members updated on this as it evolves.

JP thanked the forum members for their time and noted that we may look to hold in person forums in the future.

## Rebecca Johnson (WG Head of Transport Strategy) and Corinna James (WG Head of Transport Planning and Appraisal) - National Transport Delivery Plan and regional transport plans

Corinna James (CS) addressed the forum members and provided a presentation about the regional transport plans, which are a requirement of the Transport act 2000. The duty to prepare transport plans has now transferred from LAs (Local Authorities) to CJCs (Corporate Joint Committees), however the duty to deliver these remails with the LAs.

CJ outlined the history of Regional Transport Plans from 2008 to the current situation with the 2021 Wales Transport Strategy. There are 9 existing Local Transport Plans, the deadline for replacing these was extended to 2022. But this has now been replaced by the CJCs

The approval of Welsh transport plans must go through Welsh Ministers, must be consistent with the Wales Transport Strategy and the policies must be adequate for the implementation of the strategy.

The Welsh Government does not have statutory duty to provide guidance. But the CJCs must consider any guidance issued by WG on content, preparation, alteration, and publication of plans, as well as the needs of disabled persons (Equality Act 2010).

CJ went through the key points of the Wales Transport strategy and what the Welsh Government (WG) will be expecting the RTPs (Regional Transport Plans) to focus on. CJCs will be expected to look at current and future trends, policies set out in RTPs must maximise wellbeing goals and sustainability, take account of the Road Review NTDP, Active Travel, Bws Cymru and Metro plans.

CJ shared the proposed timetable with members and then opened the floor to questions with some prompts for questions on screen.

Ann Elias (AS) asked what the requirement would be to provide a delivery programme with an output, and will there be a cost estimate of what ambition those programmes should be? CJ answered that initial discussions would like a deliver programme, but this would be different than previously, with the CJCs writing the transport plans and LAs delivering them as two separate bodies, even though the CJCs are made up of LA (Local Authority) members. The delivery plan would be made by the LAs rather than the CJC (Corporate Joint Committees).

Rebeca Johnson (RJ) added that we need to take a team Wales approach, bringing partners across the sector together as we have today at the forum. WG are keen to help teams on the ground to facilitate change. There are challenges around giving set dates and budges because not all the actions sit with the LAs, WG or TFW, we must come together to make it work. There is an element now of codesigning how this will work in the future.

David Dawkins (DD) asked about the new white paper on bus transport, at the Community Transport Association they are experiencing significant passenger growth. The third sector will be a key player with the implementation of these plans. But as bus franchising moves forward, in the third sector we are still running with old rules and regulations. As CPCs and LAs draw, up plans they must consider the implications for community transport not just conventional passenger transport. How can we modernise rules and regulations to allow community transport to integrate, considering that they are experiencing growth.

RJ noted that the 1985 legislation referred to and the challenge this represents in rural areas and other specific areas where community transport is heavily relied on in those communities. We need to look at the wider picture of how people travel, including community transport, active travel, bus, and train connections. Looking at the entire connection link that is needed in communities, not just mode by mode. That level of integration does represent a big challenge. Looking at specific communities needs given geography, employment areas, how people move around. Ensuring that the transport system reflects what people need.

RJ then shared her presentation on the NTDP (National Transport Delivery Plan), which has been prepared in the context of the Wales Transport Strategy priorities. Moving from a modal approach to a far more integrated approach. Things are continually moving and progressing, problematic when trying to keep document up to date. The document looks to provide a framework but also a place that can be updated in line with WG policy initiatives.

The NTDP document is split into four sections. The Strategic Context, how it fits with WG and UK Gov policies. Then turning that strategy into action and what we will deliver. The Annex lists the various projects and interventions that are planned alongside details about timescales and funding. Rebecca highlighted that they cannot deliver and fund these projects alone and many of the activities will last beyond the life of the plan.

## Adam Terry (Head of Operational Planning) - How we plan our railways

Adam Terry (AT) introduced himself and explained his role within TfW before sharing a PowerPoint presentation to members. He noted that his presentation would cover timetable planning and provide insight on what influences timetables. He gave an example of the complexities around small timetable change requests which can have significant knock-on implications for UK-wide railway network, due to the interlinked nature of services. He also illustrated why it is so important to ensure good train planning using recent issues in England as an example. He showed members a blueprint for timetable planning which has many stages going back 100 weeks from going live.

AT shared slides covering a range of factors that need to be considered when planning timetables. These included:

1. Unit & Crew Diagrams
These show which services a unit will cover and its requirements, as well as what staff will do on a particular day, their requirements, and which units they can operate.
2. Demand and Capacity
Both need to be matched and the team use comparison data and longer-term forecasts to do this. New trains will have higher capacity.
3. Fleet
This includes the specifications of individual vehicles, and concerns whether trains can meet section run times. This is influenced by top speed, rate of acceleration and braking. Other considerations include couplers, number of seats, toilet facilities, and other elements. This also involves availability of certain vehicles and knock-on effects this can have.
4. Depots and Stabling
The need for the right trains to finish each day in the appropriate depot overnight, which can be influenced by fuelling, ability to empty toilets if required, and the location of crew depots for specific trains.
5. Infrastructure
This can include gauging, which refers to the size and shape requirements of trains, stations, tunnels, bridges, awnings, signals, viaducts, and walls. This can be a particular issue due to the age of the infrastructure on the UK rail network and historical lack of standardisation. The impact of this can mean some trains cannot use certain lines without significant alteration works. The length of platforms is also important, and trains that are too long for a platform cannot stop there unless they have selective door opening due to passenger safety concerns.
6. Track Gradient and Passing Loops
The railway tracks are not flat so performance of train units at different gradients can impact what lines they can operate on if they do not have the required power at full load. Single line tracks require passing loops where trains must be in the right place at the right time to pass each other to allow operation in two directions. This is a particular issue in rural Wales and in the valleys, and the transformation programme includes passing loops to allow increased services.
7. Signalling
This can impact rail planning as signalling can influence which train units and drivers can operate on a line. An example is the Cambrian line, which until recently had a unique signalling system which has now been upgraded to the European Rail Traffic Management System (ERTMS).
8. Performance
Colin showed members an example daily performance table which showed the percentage of trains that were on time (within three minutes) at various stations. This can reveal patterns in performance which can impact thinking in future timetable planning.
9. Crew Resource
This includes ensuring drivers, conductors and other crew are available in the right quantity, at the right time, and in the right places to meet increasing timetable demands. There must also be sufficient driver route and traction knowledge to operate specific routes and trains.
10. Other Trains
This includes timetabling to ensure we can share the lines with other passenger rail providers, specialist network rail maintenance trains, materials trains, freight services and charter trains.

AT summarised his presentation by noting that all these factors must come together and emphasised the need for increased standardisation of infrastructure and trains. He added that planning can be a complex puzzle which is not always possible to get right first time.

He also shared with the members the Real Time Trains website which is a useful tool for anyone interested in train travel. https://www.realtimetrains.co.uk/

## Regional Item for North and Mid Wales-Jane Purdie (Communications Business Partner – Bus) - Overview and update on the Sherpa and Fleccsi services in North Wales

Jane Purdie (JP) gave an update on bus services in the North Wales area. She also discussed the consultation on the Bws Cymru white paper, advising that TfW will be working on the “One Network, One Timetable, One Ticket” premise. The white paper sets out to better plan and grow our bus network, to meet public need, maximise WG investment in bus services and hopefully break our reliance on private cars by precuring the franchising of bus services across Wales, allowing LAs to create new municipal bus companies and relaxing restrictions on existing companies, putting them all on the same footing. TfW will have the remit from WG to deliver on many of these services.

The bus team in TfW is growing along with our remit. The bus agenda and the multi modal direction of the organisation, is moving away from just focussing on rail. We have recruited two new heads of service. Andrew Sherrington who joins us as head of Network and Service Development and Joanna Scott who will be leading on Bus Transformation.

TfW bus teams already work closely with the LAs and are aware that we cannot deliver our vision for bus travel without significant buy in and support from our key partners, bus operators, passengers and key stakeholders across the region. We see this as a very collaborative approach as we begin to drive behaviour change, promote the environmental and financial benefits of travelling by bus. Commuting and work practices have changed since the pandemic, and we need to understand how this has affected passenger needs.

JP shared a presentation with showed the core principles of the network and service development plan which looks at how we can best optimise the service for all involved, looking at everything from infrastructure to ticketing and innovative technologies. The presentation also included details of a design reference network, which looks at the different types of busses and public transport solutions based on the criteria on the grid. JP highlighted the North Wales area where a lot of this work has already been undertaken by the team.

JP advised that we have seen an increase in passengers using the Snowdon Sherpa’r Wyddfa. This is due mainly by higher levels of tourism and the recent publicity around issues of pollution in and surrounding the national park area. The connectivity and promotion of the service has hugely improved over the last year. We have been working with the LA and coach companies to deliver this new and improved service. We have introduced new maps, timetabling, and bus stop information and the one bus ticket for hopping on and off the bus.

JP also discussed the Fflecsi service which has been running in North Wales since 2020 and advised of an extension to the current zone in Hollywell to include Gronant. There will be an amendment to the Conwy zone with the removal of Corwen, to avoid duplication of this service as this area is served by the T10 Traws timetable and an introduction of electric vehicles to the Ruthin zone. There will also be the relaunch of the Fflecsi Llyn seasonal costal service. JP also advised members on upcoming developments in Denbigh with the zone extension, rural accessibility, utilising smaller 5-seater vehicle with fflecsi as the platform and in Holywell the Buckley/Caergwrle/Broughton new zones will be covered. JP shared some statistics about the Fflecsi service, a score of 4.7/5 for passenger satisfaction. Showing 11,000 rides in the last quarter in North Wales.

JP advised that TfW are also working with WG and LAs on retendering all the TrwsCymru routes and decarbonisation of the entire fleet. The low floor coach on the T10 has been trailed with the new temporary livery which is more in keeping with the TfW brand. New buses will be introduced on the retendered routes from next January, starting with the T1 Aberystwyth to Carmarthen, quickly followed by the T2 and T3 routes. The consultation for the T2 and T3 is now open, JP shared the QR code for the consultation. Other developments include two new electric vehicles on the T10 route, the T22 Caernarfon to Blaenau Ffestiniog will launch this autumn, there will be driver training across all services and the launch of the Trws Cymru passenger app this summer. As well as launching an integrated bus/rail ticket on the T2 and T3 services, as currently seen on the T1 service.

JP shared details on the Bus transformation agenda, advising that there are lots of things happening across Wales. Funding options, innovative technologies, new apps, real time information, tap on tap off fair capping etc. JP then opened the floor to questions. (There were no questions)

## Lowri Joyce (Head of Community and Stakeholder Engagement TFW) - Introduction and overview of our community engagement officers and the work they do in our communities

Lowri Joyce (LJ) outlined the work of the TfW Community Engagement officers (CEO’s) across Wales and the borders and introduced each CEO outlining their regional areas. LJ then provided details of the Community Engagement Team objectives and how their roles were aligned with the Wellbeing of the Future Generation Act, explaining that each CEO had a specific project to support the seven well-being goals, details of which are below.

Alex Chung, CEO for Metro Central and the Bay outlined the work he undertakes to support the “A Prosperous Wales Goal” (Good Neighbour). He outlined the work supporting and encouraging schools and colleges pupils, in particular women to undertake STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) subjects and how TfW collaborated and supported small community groups through its Lottery funded Green Routes Project.

Jess Clement and Ross Whiting, CEO’s for South East Wales outlined their work to meet the “A Vibrant Culture Goal” (Education). Jess and Ross gave an overview of the education support they had provided including classroom talks and seminars to promote the work and careers within TfW, school visits to the Mock Up in Taff’s Well and the Young People Charter. Jess and Ross then outlined their work in the South East Wales region where they are heavily involved in the development of the Metro, hosting drop-in sessions and updating stakeholders on key upcoming project and works.

Tomos Davies, CEO for Mid and West Wales outlined his work to meet “A Healthier Wales Goal” (Community Safety & Wellbeing). Sharing details of the work undertaken in the past year, for example working with partners to deliver presentations around lineside safety, anti-social behaviour and suicide prevention. He promoted the upcoming Rail Safety Week, centred around the Network Rail’s ‘Beware of the Bubble’ campaign which was happening at the end of July 2022.

Paula Bowen, CEO for Wales and the Borders outlined her work to meet the “A Resilient and Globally Responsible Wales Goal”. As part of her role, she has concentrated on promoting Modal Shift, particularly active travel. This included working with communities to improve their understanding of local modal shift and active travel issues, including on active-travel station improvements. She outlined the community work undertaken by TfW in Anglesey and the LA active travel officers’ group which was overseen by TfW. Paula then outlined her work in the region including supporting the new TfW Lottery funded Community Woodland project and her work in promoting fflecsi bus service in Newport.

Elise Jackson, CEO for North and Mid Wales finished the presentation giving an overview of her work in supporting the “A More Equal Wales Goal” (Mobility and Inclusion) which involves working with local accessibility groups, health boards and the third sector to identify barriers to public transport and working with TfW accessibility panel to effect change and improvement. Elise then provided details of TfW community engagement initiatives in Mid and North Wales including the woodland project, and how she is working with community groups to help shape public transport projects utilising the Talking Transport Toolkit.

Questions

No questions were raised by members on this item.

* **Forum Close**

**AOB-**

Ian Nellist- A trip of two signposts

The chair welcomed Ian Nellist from the federation of small businesses who shared with the forum members details of a recent train journey he had undertaken from Lands' End to John O’ Groats.

GJ then thanked everyone for attending the forum and closed the meeting.

## Forum digital chat highlights

Highlights of the conversation within the chat function of the Forum were:

**Andrew Saunders**

Excellent Adam - thank you very much

**David Dawkins**

Thank you very much for the very timely presentations on the NTDP and the development of bus. Community Transport Association (Wales) has contributed to 'One Network, One Timetable, One Ticket' as the latest key stage in the development of Bws Cymru - our focus is firmly on the third sector mini plan of Llwybr Newydd because community transport demand is growing so quickly, and especially post COVID. So, in terms of road-based passenger transport perhaps the NTDP delivery team and the TfW bus team may like to look over our new policy documentation recently written to reflect the contemporary needs of the community as Bws Cymru develops, the CJC's form, and the White Paper on bus transport moves to its next stage of replacing the out-of-date 1985 Transport Act. Thanks again, David

## Next Stakeholder Forum

The next Stakeholder Forum will be on 28th September via Microsoft teams.