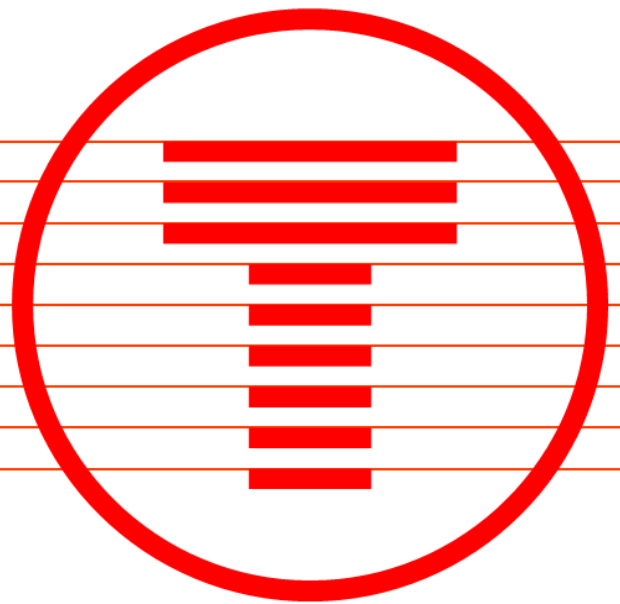


Fforwm Rhanbarthol TrC – Gogledd a Canolbarth Cymru TfW Regional Forum – North and Mid Wales

04 March 2021



Adroddiad o'r cyfarfod Meeting report

North and Mid Wales Regional Stakeholder Forum

The forum met on the 4th March 2021, 10:00 – 12:30

Attendees

Forum Members

Andrew Mytton	Public Transport Officer, Wrexham County Council	
Andrew Dawson	Transport Manager, Conwy Council	
Chris Wilson	Transportation Policy and Strategy Manager, Ceredigion Council	
Claire Williams	Cambrian Railway Partnership Development Officer	
David Beer	Senior Manager Wales, Transport Focus	10:55 – 11:45
Jamie Sant	Community Rail Officer, Wrexham Bidston Line	
Jim Jones	North Wales Tourism and Mersey Dee Biz Council	
Karen Williams	Community Rail Officer Conwy Valley and North West Wales Coast	
Lucas Stephens-Benjamin	Transport for Greater Manchester Rail Operations	
Michelle Clarke	Project Co-ordinator NW, Community Transport Association	
Michelle Roles	Transport Focus	10:55 – 11:45
Nick Smith	Regional Growth Manager, Avanti West Coast	
Prof Paul Spencer	Head of College (College of Environmental Sciences and Engineering) Bangor University	
Peter Daniels	Transport Officer, Denbighshire Council	
Robin Tudor	Head of PR and Communications, Liverpool Airport	

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

Alexia Course	Director of Transport Operations	10.05 – 10:20
Carolyn Hodrien	Community Engagement Officer, North & Mid Wales	
Geoff Ogden	Consultancy and Corporate Services Director	10:20 -10:40
Jeremy Whitaker	Programme Lead	10:40 – 10:55
Lee Robinson	Development Director for North Wales	
Lewis Brencher	Director of Communications	10:55 – 11:45
Lowri Joyce (Chair)	Stakeholder Manager, North & Mid Wales	10:00 -10:05
Mark Neate	Programme Manager	12:15 – 12:25
Ruth Wojtan	North Wales Metro Programme Manager	
Wendy Jones	Cleaning Operations Manager	

External Speakers

Tracey Messner	Public Affairs Manager, Network Rail	11:45 – 12:05
Andy Scogings	Head of Strategic Planning, Network Rail	11:45 – 12:05
James Jackson	Industry Programme Director, Network Rail	11:45 – 12:05
Helen Hodgson	Sponsor, Network Rail	12:05 – 12:15

Apologies

Ann Elias	Strategic Transport Officer, Growing Mid Wales Partnership-Strategic Transport
Andrew Saunders	Surface Access Strategy Manager, Manchester Airport
Ceri Hansom	Integrated Transport Unit Manager, Flintshire Council
Ceri Taylor	Public Affairs Manager TfW
David Jones	Rail Development Manager, Liverpool City Region
Dave Whall	Stena Line
Dylan Gallanders	Support and Executive Engagement, Community Transport Association
Gerard Rhodes	Strategic Transport Service, Cheshire West and Chester Council
Geraint Morgan	Community Rail Manager, South TfW
Gethin Jones	Business Support Manager, TfW
Hugh Evans	Head of Community Rail, TfW
Iwan Cadwaladr	Ynys Mon County Council
Iwan Prys-Jones	Programme Manager, North Wales Economic Board
Katie Powis	Stakeholder Manager, Mid and South West Wales TfW
Lois Park	Senior Rail Stakeholder Manager TfW
Mark Barton	Irish Ferries
Melanie Lawton	Community Rail Manager, North TfW
Mike Learmond	Senior Development Manager, Wales, FSB
Owain Roberts	Northern Rail
Paul Williamson	RNID
Sean Croshaw	Strategic Rail Manager, Transport for Greater Manchester
Rhian Wyn Williams	Gwynedd County Council
Steph Smith	Senior Public & Community Transport Officer, Conwy Council
Sam Hadley	Network Rail
Tony Caine	Traffic and Travel Manager, Powys County Council (
Val Hawkins	Chief Executive MWT Cymru Mid Wales Tourism
Vincent Goodwin	Travel Officer, Powys County Council

Note from the Chair, Lowri Joyce

“Once again, it was great to welcome and hear from our ever-growing members. I’d like to give thanks to our presenters who provided updates on the Wales and Borders Rail Service Contract, TfW Vision for 2021/22, Fares in Recovery, and an overview of the work completed at Barmouth and Bow Street. As well as hearing about these important updates, members had the opportunity to engage in discussion via a Network Rail Panel Q&A, and an interactive workshop on Building Passenger Trust in Public Transport Post-COVID. I would like to give thanks to members who further contributed to workshop discussions that help us to shape the future of transport provision in these challenging times. Thank you for your time and invaluable contributions.”

Agenda

1. Introduction & Apologies

Lowri Joyce welcomed the forum members to the fourth meeting of the Wales and Borders regional Forum. Nichole introduced the format of the meeting, including the use of Mentimeter, together with a reminder of the Travel Safer messaging and Welsh Government rules still in place across Wales in respect of the Covid-19 pandemic.



2. TfW Highlights and the new approach for Wales and Borders rail

Alexia Course, Director of Transport Operations (TfW) gave an overview of TfW's successes over the past two years. Alexia provided an update on key achievements, new rolling stock, customer service improvements and the recent opening of Bow Street Station on the Cambrian Line, between Borth and Aberystwyth railway stations. The short presentation also discussed the ownership and transformation of the Core Valley Lines since August 2020, as well as TfW's new organisation contract and structure with the Welsh Government.

3. TfW Vision for 2021/22

Geoff Ogden, Director of Corporate Services (TfW) provided an overview of the changes and importance of multi-modal transport for the future. Geoff discussed TfW's responsibilities by the Welsh Government and how these form TfW's strategic objectives, business plan, transport strategy and delivery plan for the year. Future work will bring together stakeholders to create an integrated and multi-modal transport system for Wales. Forum members are also invited to express their thoughts.

Jim Jones, Director of North Wales Tourism, raised about DfT's consultation regarding three options to reduce congestion around the Castlefield corridor in Manchester. Lee Robinson gave an overview of the consultation and confirmed that TfW would be responding to support the option to retain a direct connection to Manchester airport from North and Mid Wales.

4. Fares in Recovery

Jeremy Whitaker, Network Growth Lead (TfW) discussed the decrease in passengers using the transport network considering the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic. Jeremy explained the impact this has had on fare prices from January 2021. Jeremy provided an overview of a regional strategy by Network Rail on changes to regulated fares, tactical pricing opportunities for a post Covid-19 world and new product developments to encourage people back onto the network when it is safe to do so.

Claire Williams, Cambrian Railways Partnership Development Officer, noted that the price of the Cambrian Card had increased suddenly over the past few years without consultation, and that uptake of the card had fallen dramatically. Jeremy Whitaker suggested that the price of the card had been frozen so that they could be reviewed and asked if Clare could share her research into the use of the Cambrian Card.

Peter Daniels, Transport Officer, Denbighshire County Council asked whether in future rail staff and the route planner will direct people to more convenient buses rather than longer distance trains. Jeremy Whitaker confirmed that the route planning system would recognise, for all intents and purposes, the Traws Cymru service would be recognised as a rail service. However, fares structures for local services wouldn't change.

5. Workshop: Building Passenger Trust in Public Transport Post-COVID

David Beer, Senior Manager Wales, Transport Focus, provided an update on the Transport Focus research and insight on passenger travel for the future considering the Covid-19 pandemic. David explained that Transport Focus had been continuing to survey passengers with results highlighting some of the challenges, including the perception of safety and cleanliness on transport and the changing attitudes of travelling for both leisure and commuting for work/business purposes.

Lewis Brencher led on from the presentation held by Transport Focus and provided a second workshop session at the forums based on feedback and three key themes were highlighted



by panel members during the last forum. The session explored these themes in more detail and the Sense Maker as a survey tool. Lewis explained that further comments are always welcome and that he can be contacted via lewis.brencher@tfw.wales

Theme 1: Understanding **fear** and the practical steps we can take to reduce this

Theme 2: Exploring potential **fares** initiatives and what may suit future travel needs

Theme 3: Examining **flexibility**; what is the 'new normal' and how can transport adapt to suit

Discussions in the breakout rooms included:

- The messaging up until now from UK Govt has told people not to use public transport so we need to consider how we counter that message and prove it's safe, when the time is right.
- There will be continued restrictions going forward, and by June it won't be back to normal. Mask wearing and having people such as conductors present on the train will give the impression it is a safe environment.
- Multi-flex ticketing to be widened outside of CVL network, including Borderlands
- Leisure market needs to link in with other promotions, smaller groups and couple trips.
- Transport networks need to be interlinked. More needs to be done to link multi-modal transport, to enable options for people to use it. For example, if there is a good bus service but poor train service, people are less likely to use public transport as a whole.
- Community transport needs to be enhanced, especially for people with a disability who may find that this is their only affordable option.

The workshop feedback will be collated into a wider series of consultation that TfW is conducting at the Advisory Panel and as part of its public Sense Maker survey. The emergence of a possible campaign on the importance of these issues is already being discussed.

6. Network Rail Panel Q&A

Tracey Messner, Public Affairs Manager, Network Rail invited questions and feedback on the development of the railway in Wales and Borders and asked panel members to give their views on Network Rail and how they could improve services for North and Mid Wales.

David Beer asked whether more detail could be given on the timeline for infrastructure investments in North Wales and North West England. Andy Scogings, Head of Strategic Planning, Network Rail suggested that line speed optimisation was taking place and outlined some specifics, and explored other interventions that were being worked on with Transport for Wales over the next 10 years.

Jamie Sant asked whether the Shotton cord feasibility study from 2002 is still being proposed for rail improvements. James Jackson, Industry Programme Director, Network Rail suggested that connectivity at Shotton was important and talked around some of the other proposals being introduced around Shotton.

Claire Williams asked for an update on the signalling work on the Cambrian Line, James Jackson gave a verbal update on the work that was planned and the benefits rail users will see, including how the signalling works will ensure compatibility with new trains.

7. Barmouth Possession

Helen Hodgson, Sponsor, Network Rail, updated the members on work that has already been completed on the Barmouth viaduct and planned future works.

Bow Street Station

Mark Neate, Programme Manager (TfW) presented details of the work completed at Bow Street station including the virtual opening that took place on 1st March 2021.

8. AOB

Lowri Joyce noted that the Snowdonia National Park consultation was underway and interested members were encouraged to take part.

Actions

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

Action	What will be done?
None recorded	

Forum digital chat highlights

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

“Great to have services running as we know on the Halton Curve line, however despite being operational for nearly 2 years, sadly the fare structures for services to Liverpool Airport remain uncompetitive due to the incorrect bus add on fare being used (3-mile bus journey connection fare currently higher than the rail fare). Do we know when the fare structure issues will be resolved to help make it attractive to travel to Liverpool Airport by train with TfW? “

“We'd been advised that this issue was due to be resolved early this year so we will check with the team on what the latest is, as they have been working on resolving this.”

“Can I just check if TfW are submitting a formal response to Manchester Recovery Taskforce DfT Consultation? Are you a member of the Taskforce - or will you be asking to become a member?”

“Yes, we will be responding. TfW Rail Ltd will also be responding. Feel free to drop me a line afterwards”.

“Can I inquire on Have TFW been instructed to ramp up services by the Welsh government and when we can expect 1 tph back between North Wales – Airport? Also, would you be able to share any figures on current patronage and crew availability.”

“I can certainly share that data with you. We are reviewing the timetable on a regular basis - I believe the next crucial milestone for us will be schools reopening and Easter”

“Many thanks for the invitation today, and many thanks to the presenters, excellent information for someone who is fairly new to TfW. I have another meeting at 12.30. I look forward to joining your all again. Stay safe”

“Bow Street looks great - well done to all.”

Next Regional Stakeholder Forum

The next North and Mid Wales Regional Stakeholder Forum is scheduled for Tuesday 11th May 2021. The meeting will be held virtually over the Microsoft Teams platform between 10:00 – 12:00.