**Fforwm Rhanbarthol Rhanddeiliaid Cymru a'r Gororau Wales and BordersRegional Stakeholder Forum**

**9 September 2021**



**Adroddiad o’r cyfarfod**

**Meeting report**

Wales and Borders Regional Stakeholder Forum

The forum met on the 9th of September 2021, 10:00 – 12:30

**Attendees**

**Forum Members**

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| Ann Elias | Mid Wales Growth Forum |
| Alex Woodall | Transport for Greater Manchester |
| Christian Schmidt | Monmouthshire County Council |
| David Hibbs | Sustrans |
| David Jones | Liverpool City Region |
| Heather Bolton | Telford and Wrekin Council |
| Michelle Roles | Transport Focus |
| Peter Bethell | Birmingham City Council |
| Rebecca Taylor | Halton Borough Council |
| Simon Nicholls | Newport City Council |
| Stephanie Mansell-Jones | Shrewsbury Bid |
| Tim Pritchard | Shropshire County Council |
| Toby Rackliff | West Midlands Rail Executive |
| Richard Gibson | Crosscountry Trains |
| Victoria Hammond | Herefordshire County Council |
| Karen Heppenstall | Midlands Connect |
| Gwyn Smith | Sustrans Cymru |

**Speakers**

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| Lee Robinson | Development Director for North Wales | 10:05-10:20 |
| Kate Clark  Andy Holder  Mat Howells | Policy Advisor, TFW  Contractor, TFW  Senior Transport Modeller, TFW | 10:20-11:00 |
| Gail Davies | Welsh Government | 11:00 – 11:30 |
| Thomas Parker | Rail Performance Analyst | 11:30 – 11:45 |
| Dale Crutcher | Senior Sponsor, Network Rail |  |
| Lewis Brencher | Director of Communications and Engagement, TfW | 11:45 – 11:55 |

**Apologies**

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| David Beer | Transport Focus |
| Robert Niblett | Gloucestershire County Council |
| Paul Jones | Newport City Council |
| Matt Johnson | Shropshire County Council |
| Andy Moreton | Shropshire County Council |
| Gerard Rhodes | Chester and Cheshire West Council |
| Matt Powell | Telford and Wrekin Council |
| Richard Hibbert | Cheshire East Council |
| Adam Graham | Warrington Borough Council |
| Heather Bolton | Telford and Wrekin Council |
| Hannah McDonnell | Gloucestershire CRP |
| Jon Harris | Gloucestershire CRP |
| Sean Croshaw | Transport for Greater Manchester |
| Sarah Spink | Midlands Connect |
| Fay Easton | West Midlands Trains |
| Eddie Muraszko | Department for Transport |
| Peter West | Department for Transport |
| Mike Learmond | Federation of Small Businesses |
| Mark Hooper | Visit Shropshire |
| Rachel Jones | Visit Herefordshire |
| Steve Gardner Collins | Visit Gloucestershire |
| Ridhi Kalaria | Sustrans |
| Seb Slater | Shrewsbury Bid |

**Note from the Chair, Mike Dalton, Stakeholder Manager, TfW**

*“This was our sixth Borders Regional stakeholder forum, and I’m really grateful to our stakeholders across the Borders who attended to share with us their insights. I’d like to give thanks to our presenters who provided updates on the National Transport Delivery Plan, Bws Cymru, the rail service, Network Rails AFA schemes, and our Demand Recovery Campaign. As well as hearing about these important updates, members had the opportunity to participate in a Q&A session with Lee Robinson, Development Director for North Wales Operations for Transport for Wales. I would like to give thanks to members who further contributed to our breakout room discussions and completed our interactive Mentimeter poll. Thank you for your time and invaluable contributions.”*

**Agenda**

1. **Introduction & Apologies**

Mike Dalton welcomed the forum members to the sixth meeting of the Wales and Borders regional Forum. Mike introduced the format of the meeting, including an update on the current Travel Safer messaging and Welsh Government rules still in place across Wales in respect of the Covid-19 pandemic.

1. **Question Time with the Director of Communications and Engagement, Transport for Wales**

Mike introduced Lee Robinson who gave an overview the compliance of face coverings on public transport. Lee gave an overview of significant milestones in the last few months, including the purchase of Pullman Rail Ltd; Station Upgrades planning for Chester, Flint, and Runcorn East; planned increases of services and new through fares linking stations to destinations via bus; as well as 1bws ticket and the fflecsi expansion in Newport.

As part of the Q&A David Jones, Liverpool City Region, asked about the last train on the Wrexham Bidston line, in each direction. Lee Robinson confirmed the train would come back into service from the December 21 timetable. Passenger growth beyond the December 21 timetable would determine the return to the pre-covid level of service provision in the timetable.

Christian Schmidt, Monmouthshire CC, asked about a local service to Abergavenny which would allow Marches services to be sped up. This was planned pre-pandemic, but wasn’t progressed. Lee suggested we could take a look at this again.

Ann Elias, the Mid Wales Growth Partnership, suggested a number of late services were terminating at Shrewsbury rather than going on to Birmingham and sought clarity that those services would be restored. Lee suggested that he would defer this point, and get back to Ann.

1. **National Transport Delivery Plan – Next Steps**

Kate Clark. Government Advisor, TFW introduced the Welsh Transport Appraisal Guidance (WelTAG) which links into the UK transport appraisal. WelTAG looks at how we spend and deliver public transport in Wales and analyses how planning is considered. The Welsh Government (WG) have just published Llwybr Newydd – The Welsh Transport Strategy. The plan looks at how WG can deliver sustainable and effective travel in Wales and links into the Future Generations Act’s wellbeing goals and ambitions. Kate Clark is currently drafting the new WelTAG before it goes out to consultation and is linking it to Llwybr Newydd.

Andy Holder, TFW Contractor, gave an overview ofthe National Transport Delivery Planand its development in Wales. The plan will be a key guide on funding and delivering transport in Wales. The plan will incorporate various strategies such as the upcoming Bus Plan 2022 and Net Zero Wales. A 4-month consultation will take place soon.

Mat Howells, Senior Transport Modeller, TFW, outlined that WG are in the process of developing a matrix for monitoring and evaluating transport delivery. The methodology and matrix will be published in the Autumn and a baseline report is planned for early 2022.

Christian Schmidt suggested that having an NTDP every five years would leave them feeling as if they had little relation to each other, and suggested it should be delivered annually in more of a continuing programme, which would allow the stakeholders to follow it more closely.

1. **Bws Cymru – The Welsh Government’s 5 year Plan for Buses in Wales**

Gill Davies, Welsh Government gave an overview of the Bus Plan which is currently in the consultation phase. Once published it will form a 5-year plan for bus services in Wales. The new plan will look at the ongoing reform of bus services with WG moving from local delivery services to regional services. The aim is to launch the plan in Winter 2021/22.

Michelle Roles, Transport Focus, noted that Transport Focus have a lot of research into barriers to using bus, and priorities for the customer, including reinforcing safety and confidence.

Christian Schmidt suggested that it’s not clear who was doing what in the bus sector. The NTDP gave an overview of what the Welsh Government can and can’t do, and what other stakeholders can and can’t do. Christian suggested this was a crucial issue in relation to bus.

Simon Nicholls suggested that working with Government to understand the role of CGCs (Corporate Governance Committees) would be beneficial to all parties.

1. **Rail Service Update**

Tom Parker, Rail Performance Analyst, gave a rail service update with consideration to the new timetable for Sept 2021 and late 2021. Services are currently at 85% of 2019 provision in keeping with other UK operators. Restricted pandemic services and issues with rolling stock and driver availability has affected services, however stations that were closed have now been opened in N Wales and after the blockade rail services should be back to normal, and stations reopened on the Cambrian line. TFW are focused on lifting the timetable next Summer to reflect the increase in leisure travel.

Christian Schmidt asked when the hourly Cheltenham service would be coming in. Tom explained the number of trains from 6 to 10 from the December 21 timetable. A consistent 1tph service will be delivered between Cardiff and Cheltenham by December 22.

David Jones raised concerns about omitted stations, Earlestown, Newton-le-willows and East Didsbury. Lowri explained that there were a number of station omissions that were not caused by COVID-19 but by increasing length of trains, curvature of the platform at Earlestown and length of platform at Newton-le-willows and East Didsbury. Lowri followed up this point by email.

1. **Access for all Update – Dale Crutcher, Senior Sponsor, Network Rail**

Dale Crutcher gave an update on the progress of Access for All projects at Abergavenny, Cwmbran, Ludlow, Whitchurch and Ruabon. Dale walked stakeholders through the design of new station footbridges and explained some of the design choices that had been made.

Ann Elias, Mid Wales Growth Forum, asked whether changing the GRIP process to PACE was making a difference in the process of delivering AFA. Dale Crutcher suggested that the optioneering process was already relatively straightforward for AFA.

Gwyn Smith, Sustrans Cymru, raised that the footbridge designs didn’t provide much rain coverage for people with limited mobility using the lift. Dale explained that in most stations, the lift was being reversed so that the entrance sits beneath the stairwell, so could provide better weather protection.

Peter Bethell, Birmingham City Council, gave his thanks for Network Rail and Dales team continuing work he had delivered with Shropshire Council earlier in his career.

1. **Demand Recovery - Lewis Brencher, Director of Communications and Engagement**

Lewis Brencher, Director of Communications and Engagement (TfW) discussed the new TfW campaign to promote multimodal public transport. ‘The Real Social Network’ is to respond to the longer-term plan around modal shift and decreasing carbon emissions as well as increasing service users post pandemic and driving behavioural change. Lewis showed the proposed TV campaign to the group – a 60-second advert to be shown November onwards.

1. **AOB**

None

**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?** |
| Presentations to be shared with forum members | Presentations will be attached to the diary marker |
| Lee Robinson to get back to Ann Elias on trains terminating at Shrewsbury Station rather than continuing on to Birmingham | This was clarified at a later meeting on the December 22 timetable. |
| Kate Clark to set up meeting with Christian Schmidt on the NTDP | Kate Clark to set up meeting with Christian Schmidt on the NTDP |
| Thomas Parker to look into consistent 1tph service between Cardiff and Cheltenham | This was clarified at a later meeting on the December 22 timetable. |
| TfW to follow up with David Jones regarding omitted stations | Steve Whitley got in touch with David Jones at Liverpool City Region |

## Forum digital chat highlights

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

* WMRE will be consulting on timetables across the whole West Midlands region (Including Birmingham - Shrewsbury WMR services) This should go public later this month! Also AWC are consulting on their timetables from next week
* Andy - every 5 years you end up with a series of one-offs, which have little relation to each other (just like the Local Transport Plans). Annual would make it much more of a continuing programme and should help to ensure that stakeholder can follow what's going on. (Also, when most of the funding went via regional transport consortia, WG made us draw up annual delivery plans (as well as annual reports with a table of spend against every project))
* I agree with Christian - defining roles and responsibilities for all modes between STBs, CAs and LAs is a key deliverable for success, and something we're working through just now at Midlands Connect.
* I helped to get the funding for an access ramp at Ludlow in 1997 - I thought we already had step-free access there!
* [**Changing Place Toilet fund**](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/share-of-30m-changing-places-toilets-fund-now-open-for-applications) -Share of £30m Changing Places toilets fund now open for applications. Councils are being urged to apply for a share of a £30 million fund to install life-enhancing Changing Places toilets in public places and tourist attractions.
* [Video Campaign] Looks good! Positive messaging and nice juxtaposition of real world and online "virtual world"
* 20 mph consultation – WG pilot scheme in certain regions if want to have your say here is the link[**https://gov.wales/proposal-reduce-speed-limit-20mph-residential-streets**](https://gov.wales/proposal-reduce-speed-limit-20mph-residential-streets)
* Transport for Wales (TfW) is asking the public to take part in a survey that will help future transport planning following the covid-19 pandemic:[**Transport for Wales launch public survey (tfw.wales)**](https://news.tfw.wales/news/transport-for-wales-launch-public-survey-1)
* Annual Report [**https://news.tfw.wales/news/transport-for-wales-publishes-annual-report-for-202021**](https://news.tfw.wales/news/transport-for-wales-publishes-annual-report-for-202021)
* Really good event Mike. Many thanks for the detailed updates

## Next Regional Stakeholder Forum

The next Borders Regional Stakeholder Forum is scheduled for November/December 2021