**Fforwm Rhanbarthol Rhanddeiliaid — Gogledd a Canolbarth Cymru**

**North and Mid Wales — Regional Stakeholder Forum**

**Wednesday 30 March 2022**



**Adroddiad o’r cyfarfod**

**Meeting Report**

North and Mid Wales Regional Stakeholder Forum

The forum met on the 30th march 2022, 09:58 – 11:55 (via Microsoft Teams)

**Attendees**

**Forum Members**

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| Alex Woodall |  |
| Ann Elias | Ceredigion Council, Mid Wales Regional Engagement Team – Strategic Transport, Highways & Environmental Services |
| Claire Williams | Cambrian Rail Partnership, Partnership Development Officer |
| David Dawkins | Community Transport Association |
| Iwan Cadwaladr | Anglesey Council, Senior Engineer Transportation |
| David Jones | Rail Development Manager, Liverpool City Region |
| Karen Williams | Conwy Valley Rail Partnership, Community Rail Officer |
| Laura James-Mowbray (BUE) | North Wales Economic Ambition Board, Strategic Transport Lead for North Wales |
| Martin Clarke | Community Rail Network- Wales, Community Rail Support and Sustainability Manager |
| Martina Feilzer | Bangor University |
| Nick Smith | Senior Regional Growth Manager, Avanti |
| Richard Whiting | Heart of Wales Line CRP Officer |
| Rob Jones | Coleg Cambria, Yale, Bersham Road and Llysfasi campuses |
| Val Hawkins | Tourism Mid Wales Tourism |

**Transport for Wales**

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| Alex Fortune | Senior Project Manager |
| Elise Jackson | Community Engagement Officer (North and Mid Wales) |
| Gail Jones | Stakeholder Manger (North and Mid Wales) |
| Helen Dale | Stakeholder Manger |
| Jamie Warner | Community Engagement Officer |
| Kelsey Barcenilla | Stakeholder Manger (Cardiff Region) |
| Laura Kendrick | Communications Business Partner (North Wales) |
| David O’Leary | Commercial and Customer Experience Director |
| Lewis Brencher | Communications and Engagement Director |
| Matthew Breese | Brand Manger |
| Lowri Joyce | Head of Community and Stakeholder Engagement |
| Melanie Lawton | Community Rail Manager (North Wales) |

**Note from the Chair, Gail Jones**

“I would like to thank all our members for attending our seventh North and Mid Wales Regional Forum. I would like to give thanks to our presenters and remind members that there will be an opportunity to ask questions after each presentation. Gail advised that the meeting would be recorded. There were no objections to this.

**Agenda**

1. **Introductions**

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

Gail Jones welcomed everyone to the forum and went through the housekeeping slides and Covid update. Gail went through the agenda and noted the Talking Transport breakout session and asked forum members to participate and give their feedback.

1. **Update on TfW**

**Lewis Brencher, Communications and Engagement Director, Transport for Wales**

Lewis gave a high-level summary, noting that it has been an interesting and challenging period, with several storms effecting services and highlighting the impact of climate change on the network and the need to increase resilience around this. He also talked about the Omicron variant which meant some reductions in the timetable, and more recent spikes meaning that restoration of the timetable has been pushed back to mid-April.

Positives to take from the period include significant recovery in passenger numbers, particularly in terms of leisure over the weekends. But there is still a gap with the traditional commuter travel market.

Lewis mentioned developments around new rolling stock, uplift in services and station improvements, although covid has caused delays this work is continuing. As well as some supply chain issues caused by the war in the Ukraine which we are working hard to limit.

Lewis noted that TfW recognise our role in terms of facilitation travel for those who are disproportionately impacted by the current cost of living and fuel crisis, ensuring that public transport remains a viable option for people. Continually looking at ticket cost and options and of course making sure we deliver the most reliable service possible as the cost for running cars increases.

Longer term, TfW have a clear and challenging target around modal shift and decarbonisation. A continuing pipeline of improvements, delivering on what we have committed to already and looking for future opportunities to continue to develop things such as the North Wales Metro.

There was a discussion around how peoples travel habits have changed about working from home, blended working, and traditional commuters. Claire Wiliams noted that in Ceredigion people are still predominantly working from home, in rural areas there is still a heavy reliance on cars.

Nick Smith from Avanti West Coast echoes what had been said about leisure travel increasing but business travel still being below normal levels post-pandemic. Its hard to compare re-covid levels with now and may not be that beneficial. Avanti are looking to the future to increase direct services into North Wales from May onwards, based on the trends of recovery they have seen. Lewis noted the importance of looking at data to tailor services to the existing demand, rather than what demand was before the pandemic to suit the needs of our passengers. Avanti and TfW will work together on this.

1. **Recovery Campaign**

**Matthew Breese, Brand Manager, Transport for Wales**

Matthew gave the forum an overview of the recovery campaign, TfW’s response to covid and encouraging people to use public transport. This is TfW’s first multimodal marketing campaign, covering rail, bus, and active travel. The ‘Real Social Network’ campaign has just been launched across all media channels.

The hope is to build TfW’s brand and encourage behaviour change, getting people to consider using public transport. To encourage people to embrace sustainable transport post pandemic when returning to work, rediscovering places, and reconnecting with people. By using the pandemic as an opportunity to reshape a positive image of public transport in Wales for the future.

Matthew showed us a short film that summed up the campaign, followed by the 60 second TV ad. The ad aims to position public transport as a facilitator of reconnecting in real life as opposed to the digital world, we have endured throughout covid.

Matthew showed the forum members the rail specific marketing film and some imagery that encourages real life interactions over online. Messaging for active travel focusing on the mental and physical wellbeing that can result from traveling more actively.

We have created a stakeholder toolkit which we will share with our stakeholders to enable them to support the campaign. This includes bilingual assets and collateral that can be used, partners can add their logos and branding to these.

Alex Woodall, from Transport for Greater Manchester asked how long the campaign will run for and wat are TfWs targets in relation to the campaign? Matthew said that it’s a behaviour change piece, with new elements of active travel and bus added to the usual rail marketing. There are KPI’s in place to evaluate the success of the campaign, we are under no illusions that its going to take time to change the behaviour of the nations and we are committed to the invest in doing that. This campaign will run for two years, this first burst will run for two months. We are taking a multiyear approach, refining, and optimising as we go. Alex was impressed by the level of ambition shown.

1. **Update on the North Wales Metro**

**Alex Fortune, Senior Project Manager, Transport for Wales**

Alex Fortune gave a high-level strategic overview of the plans for the North Wales Metro. These plans will make using public transport as easy and accessible as possible. More frequent, quicker, and cheaper journeys. Alex shared a map showing the rail and strategic bus network across North Wales. The metro will ensure connectivity between modes, bus, rail and active travel.

The last couple of years TfW have been conducting research and building up an evidence base to ensure decisions are based on true economic need to build up a business case for funding. We rely on Network Rail and DFT for funding and have a good relationship with them.

To date we have already undertaken lots of work across all modes. Working with Local Authorities in Wales and across the border. Chester and Shrewsbury stations are very important for the metro plans, so we are working very closely with these LA’s. We have been looking closely at the rail stations improvements across North Wales and this programme is ongoing. As well as the transforming towns and working with Snowdonia national park on public transport accessibility in the area.

On the Noth Wales main line, we plan to increase frequency on this line to five trains per hour to enable a turn up and go option. We have outlined a business case for this and worked with Network Rail to see what infrastructure improvements are needed to do this.

The Wrexham to Bidston, Liverpool service. Currently this is one train per hour, and we want to increase this to 2 trains per hour soon. And further aspirations to increase this to four trains per hour, right up to Liverpool City Centre. We are working closely with Liverpool City Region and Mersey Rail to see how we can integrate the services, increase services etc.

We are looking at options on the corridor from Amlwch to Bangor, the old railway is currently leased to a private group. We are looking at this route as well as Bangor to Caernarfon down to Porthmadog to increase connectivity. There is a lot of work to do, many studies to conduct so all of these plans are medium to long term. Flood risk on the coast as well as the issues on the Conwy Valley line must be considered to bolster the resilience of the network. The aspiration is to serve as wide an area as possible with improved services across North Wales.

Integration with transport hubs in Wrexham and Bangor, ensuring that developments work alongside town centre improvement schemes. Integrated ticketing across the network, hop on and off bus and train with one ticket. We are currently piloting this scheme. Traws Cymru network has also been integrated into the train ticket system.

We have new trains and buses coming to the network. Staton refurbishment and working with the community on projects such as the community hub in Llandudno.

Ann Elias asked why the Cambrian line wasn’t part of the North Wales Metro maps? What is the rural offer? Alex reassured Ann that no area on Wales would be overlooked, the slides were specifically about the Metro and that there are plans for improvements on the Cambrian line also. Ann asked that at the next forum we could give an update about mid Wales.

Richard Whitting asked about connectivity between North and South Wales. Alex said that we are still at a high level with this strategy work, Labour Plaid collision had it as a key asks for TfW. There will be further work next financial year on plans this, we are currently looking at all the options.

1. **Introduction to the Talking Transport Toolkit with Breakout Sessions**

**Elise Jackson, Community Engagement Officer and Kelsey Barcenilla, Stakeholder Manager**

Kelsey Barcenilla and Elise Jackson gave a presentation about the ‘Talking Transport’ toolkit which is currently being developed by the stakeholder and engagement team at TfW.

Elise told forum members about the ‘Talking Transport’ workbook, it is a ‘listen, learn and loop back’ tool to engage with public groups, to effectively collate user’s thoughts, impressions, and ideas to support us in creating visible change within the transport sector. The toolkit will be used to facilitate conversations at a local level. Providing members of our communities with a complete blueprint for running transport related workshops. The subsequent feedback will then help us at TFW to inform decisions based on the views of our stakeholders.

We will aim to target a range of stakeholders and community groups. This wide target audience will enable us to ensure that peoples voices are heard across different demographics.  We are striving to make this toolkit as accessible as possible and will be running pilots’ schemes with our architecture at TFW.

We’ve developed an accessible workbook which has been designed for external facilitators to follow and deliver with ease. The project works by providing in-person and pre-recorded training to facilitators who’d like to deliver sessions on transport related topics to their participants groups. During the training, a demonstration of the workbook will be provided which outlines the three key steps for success. By providing these three steps we’re enabling the facilitators and participants to choose a topic which has the most relevance to them, whilst the activities can be used to encourage in-depth conversation. The evaluation is then key to complete for Transport for Wales to gather the best insight into public and stakeholder wants and needs.

Kelsey explained that an online platform will be used to gather legitimate data which can be used for three different pathways. These three pathways include: Community take on solutions themselves as an external project, secondly data feeding into existing project or plan in TfW and thirdly, data which will be kept on file for future projects.

Once we’ve gathered the data and insight, we will then use this information to hopefully create change within TfW and the transport sector, whilst also providing an opportunity to ‘loop back’. Looping can be provided to the facilitators, or it can also be presented in more public spaces, such as on our website.

Elise talked the forum members through the process of using the toolkit and pointed out the coding system that will hopefully support the facilitator in selecting the most suitable activities. This considers age, resources, and accessibility requirements. The activities have been designed to be as interactive, inclusive, and as fun as possible. The aim is to ensure that those taking part feel relaxed and confident in sharing their views and opinions about transport. We want to know what matters to them, and we hope these activities will enable this.

Kelsey explained that within the toolkit some digital tools are suggested that groups might use to enhance their session.  But to avoid digital exclusion we have opted to make a workbook that will be delivered in person.  But there is no reason why these digital tools could not be used, in place of pen and paper should that be the preference of the group taking part.

Elise summed up the toolkit by telling forum members that ccommunity engagement leads to improved outcomes. Establishing long standing, effective partnerships between our organisation and the communities we serve. We hope that the Talking Transport toolkit will result in a greater sense of community ownership and an improved uptake of services as they are tailored to the unique aspirations of each community.

As this workbook is in development, Elise and Kelsey asked forum members to join them in break out sessions to discuss the toolkit and give their feedback.

1. **Overview of the Corporate Strategy**

**David O’Leary, Commercial and Customer Experience Director, Transport for Wales**

David O’Leary delivered a presentation about TfW’s Corporate Strategy. David noted that our Corporate Strategy is a hugely important because it sets out how TfW will deliver our vision over the next five years. It's our plan for delivering on creating customer-focused services through a safe transport network of which Wales is proud.

Over the past two years, there have been enormous challenges posed to public transport services and infrastructure delivery, by the Covid-19 pandemic. As key partners and stakeholders it’s vital that we’re bringing you with us as we map out how we’re going to deliver on what we’ve promised to transform transport in Wales. Public transport is truly operating in a changed world post Covid and it’s a real opportunity for us to change behaviors and encourage people to think about travelling in an environmentally sustainable way. Climate change and transport decarbonisation are the challenge of our times. Obviously, this a threat, but also a huge opportunity for us.

It’s encouraging that so many people are returning to using public transport more widely for work and leisure, however there’s still work for us to do in our recovery campaign, welcoming our customers back whilst reassuring them that we’ll continue to take measures to keep them safe.

As well as the huge impact on public transport, Covid also made us adapt our working arrangements.  Although we recognise that not all our colleagues can work remotely, we’ve proven we can adapt to change and be flexible in how we work and manage our work-life balances and that’s something that we’re committed to continuing with. This is also something in line with the vision of the Future Generations Commissioner for Wales for work and transport and how this will change in the coming years.

There are many other opportunities for us outlined in the Strategy. Including building new funding streams to reinvest into Wales’ transport network. Using technology to help our customers plan their journeys, making it easier to use the transport network, while also enhancing people’s experience when they use public transport. Rolling out our Metro programmes and transforming Wales’ transport infrastructure so it's fit for future generations. Continuing our multimodal focus on bus and rail for longer journeys, active travel (walking and cycling) for shorter journeys and encouraging people to make complete journeys by public transport and leave their cars at home.

In short, we have a lot to do over the next four years, there are many challenges we face but also many opportunities for us to make a real difference to people’s lives.

Our advisory, planning and development strategies focus on how we’ll plan and develop our buildings, infrastructure, and services to create a better transport network for the people of Wales and the borders.

Transport analyticsaddresses how we’ll use data and insight to support our decision-making, help us better understand the network we operate and support the Welsh Government with clear information as its expert adviser on transport.

Planning and network development focuses on how we’ll work with the Welsh Government, local authorities, and our partners to design and develop a network Wales can be proud of. Core to this is our work to support and deliver Llwybr Newydd: the Welsh Transport Strategy 2021 and the forthcoming National Transport Delivery Plan.

Transport de-carbonisation addresses how we’ll work with the Welsh Government, local authorities, and national delivery bodies such as Network Rail to deliver a de-carbonised transport network in Wales.

Social and commercial development sets out our objectives to develop our assets for the benefit of the people of Wales and the borders, including providing space and opportunity to communities, as well as how we’ll create new income streams to fund further reinvestment in Wales’ public transport network.

Network Development focuses on how our customers experience and interact with our services – aiming for increased customer satisfaction and growth of our network.

Digital technology addresses how we’ll invest in our digital assets and services to make it easier for our customers to plan and complete their journeys across Wales and the borders, while ensuring our digital systems meet our needs.

Customer experience focuses on how we’ll develop a customer-centric culture in all we do, engaging effectively with our customers, using insights to identify needs and opportunities, create clear plans to address them and use innovative methods to solve problems.

Network growth addresses how we’ll work to make it simpler and easier to use the network and ultimately increase its use. It sets out our objectives for ticketing and fares, how we’ll engage people better in our communications and encourage the use of public transport.

Integrated transport sets out how we’ll bring our activities together to create an integrated proposition for the people of Wales and the borders, including how we plan and deliver our networks, provide integrated information and multimodal facilities.

Our infrastructure and innovation strategies focus on how we’ll build and improve our infrastructure across Wales, whilst developing innovative solutions to create a better experience for our customers.

Innovation focuses on how we’ll identify barriers within TfW to providing the best customer experience and engage with businesses to identify potential solutions. We’ll also work with our partners in our innovation services subsidiary to create and deliver viable solutions.

Infrastructure development focuses on how we’ll develop our infrastructure, creating a safe, accessible, and user-friendly network across Wales and the borders. Transforming the Core Valleys Lines network is a central to our work over the next five years.

Infrastructure management sets out how we’ll manage the existing Core Valleys Lines network, ensuring that we develop and deliver a safe and reliable network infrastructure which enables our railway operation to work effectively.

Our service delivery strategies focus on how we’ll deliver transport services across Wales and the borders.

Active travel focuses on how we’ll work with the Welsh Government and Welsh local authorities to improve and develop active travel routes and information across Wales. We’ll work with cycle hire groups to increase scheme availability and promote walking and cycling as sustainable forms of transport

Bus focuses on how we’ll work with the Welsh Government, Welsh local authorities, and bus operators to reform bus services in Wales. We’ll continue to develop and invest in services to benefit bus users, while delivering the Traws Cymru and fflecsi services across Wales

Railway sets out how we’ll continue to develop, invest in and manage railway services across the Wales and Borders network – transforming the service we provide. Our three-part strategy covers:

Strategic development - sets out how we’ll work with the rail industry as a whole to develop rail in Wales and the borders

Enablement – sets out how we’ll work with Welsh local authorities and our suppliers to build a better railway

Operational delivery - sets out how we’ll focus on delivering railway operations

1. **Forum Close**

**AOB-**

Gail Jones gave a brief update on Timetable reinstatement, Lines Reopening and Our Defib Programme

## Forum digital chat highlights

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

* Laura James-Mowbray

About the Recovery Campaign “The messaging is great! Really hitting home - well done on this.”

* Martina Feilzer

“Thanks for all the interesting information - if we can help with any engagement activities/research and knowledge exchange on decarbonisation, etc - do please get in touch!”

## Next Regional Stakeholder Forum

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