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

**22nd March 2022**



**Adroddiad o’r cyfarfod**

**Meeting report**

Mid and West Wales Regional Stakeholder Forum

The forum met on the 22nd March 2022 from 10:00 – 12:00

**Attendees**

**Forum Members**

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| Hatti Woakes | North Pembrokeshire Transport Forum |
| Ann Elias | Regional Engagement Team, Strategic Transport, Cyngor Sir Ceredigion County Council |
| David Edwards | Heart of Wales Line Development Company |
| Jack Palmer |  |
| Jonathan Burnes | Programme Director, Swansea Bay City Deal |
| Paul Beecham | Swansea University |
| Ann Elias | Mid Wales Regional Engagement Team, Ceredigion Council |
| Gareth Sky | Transport & Sustainable Travel Manager, Hywel Dda University Health Board |
| Wendy Abel | Tourism Manager, Powys County Council |
| Darren Thomas | Director, Infrastructure (including Highways & Transport), Pembrokeshire Council |
| Simon Charles | Transport Strategy and Infrastructure Manager, Carmarthenshire County Council |

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

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| Alexander Bryant-Evans (Chair) | Stakeholder Manager, Mid & West Wales | 10.00 - 12.00 |
| Jamie Warner (Clerk) | Community Engagement Officer, Mid & West Wales | 10.00 - 12.00 |
| Tomos Davies | Community Engagement Officer, Mid & West Wales | 10.00 - 12.00 |
| Lowri Joyce | Head of Community and Stakeholder Engagement | 10.00 - 12.00 |
| James Price | Chief Executive Officer | 10.05 – 10.20 |
| Lewis Brencher | Director of Communications and Engagement | 10.20 – 10.40 |
| Ben George | Strategic Development Programme Manager | 10.40 – 11.00 |
| Kelsey Barcenilla | Community Engagement Officer | 11.00 – 11.30 |
| Elise Jackson | Community Engagement Officer | 11.00 – 11.30 |
| Geoff Ogden | Director of Planning, Development and Advisory Services | 11.45- 11:55 |

**Apologies**

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**Agenda**

1. **Introduction & Apologies**

Alexander Bryant-Evans welcomed the forum members to the eighth meeting of the Mid and West Wales Regional Forum, the first of 2022. Alex introduced the format of the meeting and the guest speakers, and thanked attendees for attending. Alex reminded attendees Transport for Wales’s current Travel Safer advice in respect of the Covid-19 pandemic.

1. **Transport for Wales Update and Q&A**

**James Price, Chief Executive Officer. Transport for Wales**

James Price opened the session by recapping some of the challenges faced by Transport for Wales over the last three months. Notably, this included the Omicron wave at the end of 2021 and Transport for Wales’s response in the form of an emergency timetable to respond to staff shortages. James acknowledged the inconvenience caused to some who rely on the railways but noted that it allowed Transport for Wales to be in the UK top 3 performers for its remaining services. Weather related challenges were also highlighted, with five storms in the first months of 2022. The impact on performance was acknowledged but noted that without these storms performance largely held up. James remarked that the remainder of services will be reinstated over the following weeks, with a few not being reinstated until May due to backlogs of driver training. Planned improvements will continue despite uncertainty elsewhere in the UK, although current challenges resulting from high demand in relation to resources was acknowledged. Following this he fielded questions from participants. Hatti Woakes noted that services to Fishguard wouldn’t be reinstated until May and remarked that despite Swansea Bay and West Wales Metro ambitions to make services two-hourly, she was unsure when this would be and that the improvements aspirations stated by James would only be true if this happened seven days a week. Hatti also commented the new rolling stock would still have limitations when it came to cycle capacity; and noted how Community Transport services (including Fflecsi) helps support rural communities in Pembrokeshire, and that it should be considered within multi-modal aspirations. James acknowledged her comments, noting that WELTAG considerations of additional services to Fishguard would be a longer-term process, and asked for comments on balances between seating/cycle/standing areas on trains. Hatti also noted her experiences of crowded services on the Marches line and challenges with ferry connections during disruption. James Price acknowledged this and asked for views on ticket-only services, to which Hatti raised challenges for shift workers. David Edwards encouraged James to ensure multi-modal connections are maintained, expressed praise for the Heart of Wales Line having already returned to its normal timetable and looked forward to its enhancements from December 2022 and mentioned that he is working with Lewis Brencher to explore enhancing Sunday services prior to Network Rail CP7.

1. **Transport for Wales Recovery Campaign**

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

Lewis Brencher introduced Transport for Wales’s new ‘The Real Social Network’ Recovery Campaign which aims to encourage people to return to public transport in response to both the climate emergency and impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, which saw revenue levels as low as 5% of usual during its height. He emphasised the multi-modal nature of the campaign and shared both a video outlining the decisions behind the campaign’s approach and the TV advert. He outlined the three key objectives of recovering revenue and reducing long-term reliance on subsidy, building the brand of sustainable transport, and starting to encourage behaviour change away from car usage, and how the campaign could address this through addressing emphasis on ‘rediscover[ing], reconnect[ing] and return[ing] (to work)’. The connections to Llwbyr Newydd and the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015 was emphasised, and that the campaign has been informed by behavioural insights taken from YouGov testing of messaging, noting environmental messaging was particularly effective, together with the mental health benefits of active travel. To conclude his presentation, Lewis outlined that the stakeholder toolkit will be made available to stakeholders and encouraged those attending to support the campaign. Hatti Woakes said the messaging would be of particular interest to corporate partners, and that Fishguard is an international marketplace to display this.

1. **Swansea Bay and West Wales Metro**

**Ben George, Strategic Development Programme Manager, Transport for Wales**

Ben George, Transport for Wales’s Strategic Development Programme Manager provided an update on the Swansea Bay and West Wales Metro project. After outlining its scope (including how Transport for Wales is working with local authorities to deliver projects especially with bus and active travel provisions), he delivered a summary of emerging priorities to 2029, notably developing business cases for rail service enhancements across West Wales. Areas where Transport for Wales is exploring bus improvements were also highlighted, including around Swansea, Llanelli, Carmarthen, and Pembroke Dock/Milford Haven, together with current work converting the TrawsCymru T1 service to electric vehicles and ongoing feasibility studies of hydrogen buses also emphasised. Ben outlined potential stations that are currently subject to business case studies across Swansea Bay and explained that feasibility studies are beginning following positive indications. Aspirations for 2 trains per hour from Swansea to Pembrey and Burry Port were explained, together with those for the Swansea District Line. Ben expressed hopes that the next stage of consultations will begin by the end of 2022. The South Wales Main Line Programme was also raised, including explorations of enhanced and extended services. Ben also outlined plans that support Welsh Government’s policy aims to decarbonise half of Wales’s bus fleet by 2028 and the full fleet by 2035, particularly through hydrogen bus provision and initial strategic bus corridors in Swansea and Pembrokeshire. It was explained that TfW would look at fleet provision, with associated infrastructure being improved through collaboration with local government, Welsh Government and higher education and private sector partners, together with an explanation of how current work exploring delivery partnerships with key stakeholders is progressing. Hatti Woakes requested information on how bus operators are being engaged with to support these plans, with Ben answering that loose talks have begun on the legal basis.

1. **Talking Transport – Breakout session**

**Kelsey Barcenilla, Community Engagement Officer, South East Wales and Elise Jackson, Community Engagement Officer, North Wales**

Kelsey Barcenilla and Elise Jackson from Transport for Wales’s Community and Stakeholder Engagement team introduced the new Talking Transport toolkit, which aims to establish a consistent, streamlined approach to stakeholder engagement. Its ‘listen, learn and loop back’ approach was emphasised, including how the toolkit can enable Transport for Wales to provide feedback on thoughts, impressions and ideas collected through it. Elise outlined how the workbook has been designed to train external facilitators with ease, explaining that an online platform will be used to allow facilitators to submit data collected through their session to TfW. This in turn will feed into three pathways to make visible change within the transport sector: communities taking on solutions themselves as an external project; feeding into existing Transport for Wales plans or projects; or being kept on file to inform future TfW projects. GDPR procedures were explained, particularly regarding ensuring the rights of those aged under 18. Kelsey and Elise provided a walkthrough of the workbook and its activities and topics, together with how they align with Welsh Government/Transport for Wales initiatives before establishing and leading two 10-minute breakout sessions: one reviewing the design of the toolkit and its activity sheets; and the second discussing and creating questions. After this Kelsey and Elise said that they would distribute feedback surveys following the session and asked participants to get in touch if they had any potential pilot sessions in mind. Hatti Woakes stated that although the toolkit was a great idea, she did not anticipate North Pembrokeshire Transport Forum using it due to the scope the area covered, with Kelsey offering to follow up post-meeting to discuss how the resource could be adapted to address this.

1. **Transport for Wales Corporate Strategy**

**Geoff Ogden, Director of Planning, Development and Advisory Services (Transport for Wales)**

Geoff Ogden, Transport for Wales’s Director of Planning, Development and Advisory Services, introduced the organisation’s Corporate Strategy, to be publicised soon following Welsh Government sign off. The Strategy addresses TfW’s vision for the next five years to create customer-focused services through a safe transport network of which Wales can be proud; its support for Welsh Government policy ambitions; encouraging sustainable travel and protecting against the threat of climate change; and finally, TfW’s ongoing development, particularly regarding its people and governance framework. The relationship between the Corporate Strategy and Welsh Government plans (e.g., its Twenty-year Wales Transport Strategy and National Transport Delivery Plan and Five-year Programme for Government) was established, together with its link into legislation such as the Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015. After sharing reflections from James Price on the changes and challenges faced by Transport for Wales in recent years, Geoff highlighted some upcoming opportunities such as new funding streams and Metro schemes. Its Four Pillars (Advisory, Planning and Development; Network Development; Infrastructure Innovation; and Infrastructure Management) were explained with examples being provided of how Transport for Wales is delivering these. Following this, Geoff answered questions, with Hatti Woakes raising issues with the accessibility and punctuality of rail replacement bus service vehicles and tight connections in rural areas. Geoff stated that these would be fed back to the relevant teams. Ann Elias wished to find out whether the plan would also highlight the work of subsidy companies (i.e., TfW Rail, Pullman Rail, Transport for Wales Innovation Services.), with Geoff stating that he would find out further information on how it would address these relationships and the Strategy’s link to their own individual business plans.

1. **Forum close - AOB**

**Alexander Bryant-Evans, Stakeholder Manager, Mid and West Wales**

Before opening the floor, Alexander provided a follow-on update on the Heart of Wales active travel modified Class 153s project discussed in the December 2021 forum. The project has now progressed to the design stage, with a stakeholder workshop to be held in the coming weeks. A survey and discussion using the Sgwrs platform will also be used to collect customer feedback. Hatti Woakes asked whether items considered in the Forum (especially on hydrogen buses) could be shared following the meeting to feedback, confidentiality permitting. Alex will approach Ben George to see if the slides can be shared, with the minutes to be distributed in due course. Lowri Joyce also offered the possibility to have a speaker attend the North Pembrokeshire Transport Forum to explain in more detail. Hatti said that this would have to be in the future as the organisation is not currently meeting. With no further questions Alex thanked participants and speakers for attending and contributing and closed the Forum, stating that the next would be in approximately three months’ time.

## 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 Tuesday 5th July 2022. The meeting will be held virtually over the Microsoft Teams platform between 10:30 – 12:30.