

30 June 2026

Welsh Bus Network Plan: Consultation Report

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About this document

This report summarises the consultation Transport for Wales (TfW) undertook on the Welsh Bus Network Plan. It forms part of our wider work on [bus franchising](#). In this report we lay out our findings and the next steps we'll take.

The groups consulted were the statutory consultees specified in the Bus Services (Wales) Act 2026. We consulted with local authorities, Corporate Joint Committees, national park authorities, and stakeholders representing the interests of passengers, operators and employees of local bus services in Wales. The consultation ran between 8 July and 14 October 2025.

The consultation aims were:

- Fulfil the conditions laid out in the Bus Services (Wales) Act 2026.¹
- Garner feedback from key stakeholders on the first draft of the Wales Bus Network Plan.
- Complement the public-facing surveys we have run and are running across the regions.

What we engaged on

Before publishing the Plan under section 5(1)(b) of the Act we prepared a draft of the Plan and sought the initial views of every local authority in Wales.

We then sought wider feedback on the Welsh Bus Network Plan (the Plan). As required by the Act, the Plan sets out the routes and key stopping points for standard local bus services in Wales. For flexible local bus services across Wales it sets out the geographical area including, if required, any fixed sections of the route and any fixed stopping places.

The draft Plan included the South West Wales Proposed Base Network, and the Powys 'Bridge to Franchising' network, which went live in September 2025. For North Wales, Ceredigion and South East Wales, the draft Plan detailed the current network in these regions as it operated in May 2025. This is owing to franchising being delivered via a regional roll-out which is expected to be completed by 2030. Network design discussions are underway with the local authorities in all regions and changes will be seen in future iterations of the Plan.

¹ More information on the requirements to consult can be found in the Act here: [Bus Services \(Wales\) Act 2026](#)

How we engaged

We briefed key stakeholders in June 2025. We asked consultees to provide feedback via our bilingual '[Have your Say](#)' platform. We provided introductory text on the legislative changes to how local bus services are to be run and the changes we would like to make.

To complete the survey, consultees had to create an account and provide some basic information. The Plan was detailed on an interactive map with the principal embarkation and disembarkation points. Respondents could comment on the interactive map and provide written submissions on the site.

The consultation was promoted via a bilingual e-bulletin we issued as it launched on 8 July 2025. English local or combined authorities received a separate e-bulletin, asking them to provide feedback on the cross-border network rather than the whole network.

We sent out a reminder on 2 September 2025 and extended the deadline for comments in early October, moving the closing date for consultation from 7 to 14 October 2025.

Main findings

Overview

We received 75 responses to the consultation. 44 submissions were received via the Have Your Say platform. The remainder were route specific comments left on the interactive map and direct responses to TfW via email and letter.

Formal responses were made by a mixture of statutory consultees and members of the public. Statutory responses included:

- local authorities across Wales
- bordering English authorities
- national park authorities
- NHS organisations
- transport bodies such as Transport Focus
- other formally recognised stakeholder organisations.

Generally, respondents expressed support for our ambition of a fairer, more integrated Welsh bus network.

Concerns were primarily driven by existing issues and the potential for these to recur in future networks:

- rural and small community connectivity
- loss of direct services, weak access to healthcare
- insufficient frequencies of bus services

- poor evening and Sunday provision
- cross border integration.

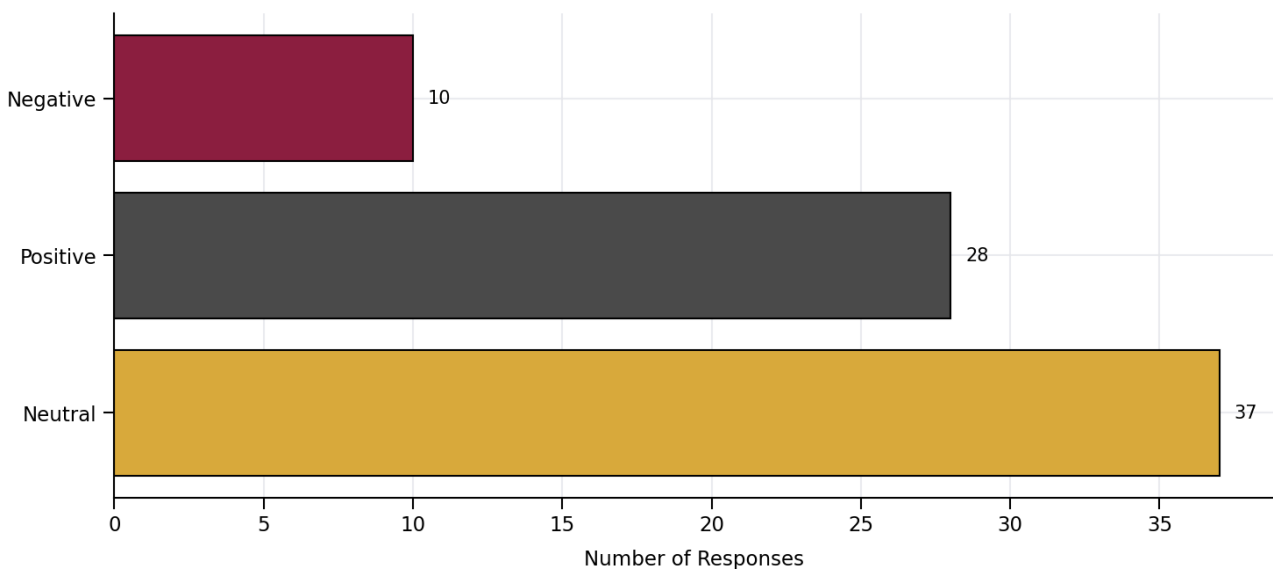
Route level comments from the interactive map provided highly specific operational insights that reinforced these wider themes.

Additionally, stakeholders provided views regarding uncertainty around funding arrangements and franchising timelines.

Generative AI analysis

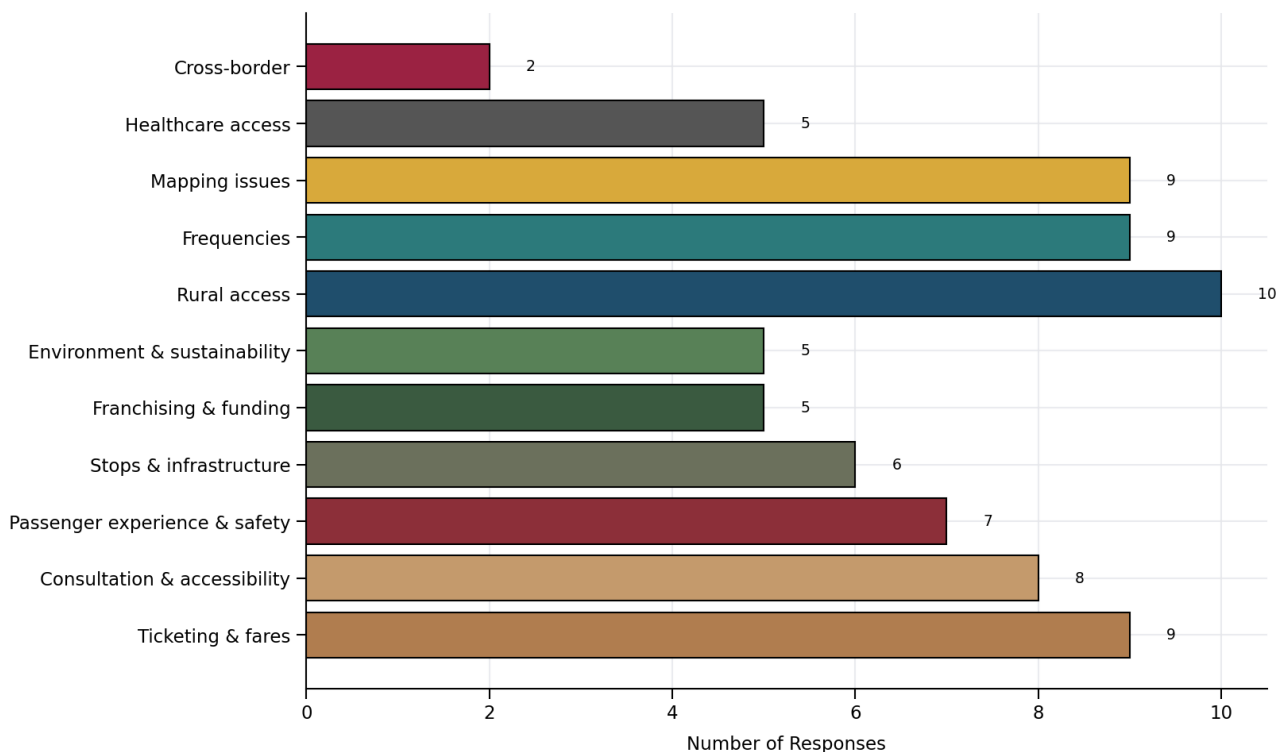
We reviewed the responses using Wordnerds, which unifies feedback channels into a single Voice of Customer and analyses them with AI. Wordnerds surfaced the big-picture themes emerging from participant responses. We then used Copilot to analyse these further and provide the granular comments, sorting and categorising them under each theme to create a structured, evidence-rich dataset.

Graph 1: Sentiment on Bus Travel in Wales



Across the 75 responses analysed, the overall sentiment is predominantly neutral to positive regarding our current network (see graph 1). This reflects broad support for our ambition of an improved, more integrated local Welsh bus network.

Graph 2 Key issues responders raised (75 responses)



The thematic analysis (see graph 2) shows that key issues for respondents related to:

- rural access
- mapping errors
- service frequencies
- healthcare access
- cross-border connectivity
- ticketing and fare integration
- consultation accessibility
- passenger experience and safety
- stop and interchange infrastructure
- the deliverability and funding of franchising.

Limited route-specific feedback was also provided.

Review of consultation process

Multiple respondents reported difficulties using the consultation platform, particularly the interactive map. They raised concerns about missing or incorrect information.

We corrected errors raised by stakeholders as quickly as possible during the consultation. However, this caused challenges for some respondents in providing timely feedback and led to us extending the consultation window by one week.

This consultation ran in parallel with a wider public consultation on the South West Wales Base Network. We've published [the findings](#).

A robust review was conducted by an independent consultant to reflect on the delivery of this consultation. This review also gathered feedback from statutory consultees to ensure our future engagement is as effective as possible.

Following the review, we'll:

- Present the Welsh Bus Network Plan in a tabular format, accompanied by schematic maps.
- Revise the consultation process to improve data quality issues.
- Avoid running major bus network consultations in parallel.
- Publish an annual report, outlining the changes we've made and our future plans.

Next steps

We're committed to engaging stakeholders on the changes we're making to the local bus network.

We want to ensure that future engagement opportunities are as effective and efficient as possible.

We'll produce an annual report covering the changes we've made to the Welsh Bus Network Plan and the details of upcoming changes.

We'll work closely with our partners to understand the level of involvement statutory stakeholders would like to have and co-create this process.