

BUS REFORM

Our commitment to
involving communities in
South West Wales

5 June 2025





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Introduction

About us

Transport for Wales (TfW) is a not-for-profit company and wholly owned subsidiary of the Welsh Government. We're responsible for the promotion of sustainable transport options and provision of a fully integrated and accessible transport network, that benefits communities across Wales.

Transport for Wales and local authorities in South West Wales are working together to prepare for Bus Reform. Together we want to create a transport network that people want to use, can and do use – helping to make it easier for people to make more sustainable transport choices now and in the future.

South West Wales will be the first region of Wales where Bus Reform will be introduced in 2027. The region incorporates Carmarthenshire, Neath Port Talbot, Pembrokeshire and Swansea. It has a range of rural and urban communities. It is home to around 700,000 people. Of these around 45% are economically active, 38% are economically inactive and 17% are under 16.

The South West Wales region has recently concluded consultation on a draft Regional Transport Plan (RTP), to set the priorities for public transport in the region. More information can be found [here](#). This document covers bus reform in the region, which is related to the wider RTP but more specific to the bus network on which we would like thoughts when we launch our engagement this summer.

About this document

We're committed to involving communities in future plans for bus services in Wales. This document sets out the start of that process – giving notice of the first public engagement which we will be running in South West Wales, commencing summer 2025.

Bus services are for everyone, not just the people who use them now. Access to buses opens up opportunities for people and their communities. It supports economic prosperity for businesses and industry. Increased bus use can help reduce car traffic and emissions. So, we encourage everyone to contribute to this engagement – whether someone's a regular bus user, occasional passenger or someone who never hops on a bus, we want to capture views on our proposals for the bus network in the region.

However, we must be honest – we are working within the limits of our resources (for example, availability of funding, buses and drivers). For this reason, we'll not be able to do everything people might want in the first phase. We need to make choices about how we use the resources we have to deliver the best services we can under our constraints. The network that we will be talking about is based around the current network, although it does include some improvements. We call this our 'Proposed Base Network'.



This commitment provides detail on:

- What topics we're asking for views, opinions and feedback on
- Why feedback on these matters is important to us
- When we'll be engaging with people and communities
- What our engagement in local communities will look like
- How to take part.

We want to hear from the region to help refine our draft proposed local bus network into one of which local people are proud.

Introduction to bus reform

The Welsh Government, local authorities and Transport for Wales are working with bus operators and key stakeholders across Wales to reform bus services. The current system of deregulation allows operators to run bus services which make profits for their business. This leaves local authorities with the responsibility of funding and providing socially necessary bus services. The current system makes it difficult to bring together commercial and socially necessary bus services into a joined up public transport network.

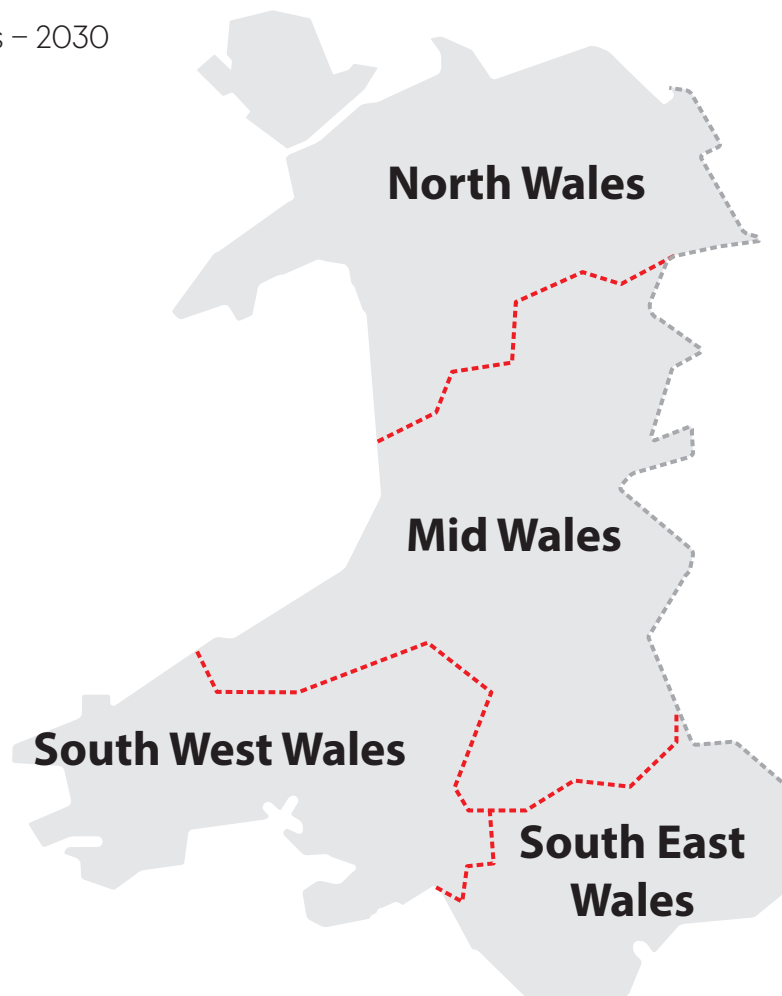
In the new scheme, called franchising, decisions about bus services in Wales (including routes, timetables, fares, hours of operation and service quality standard), will be made by Welsh Government and Transport for Wales. We'll be working in partnership with local authorities and Corporate Joint Committees (CJCs). Bus operators can bid for contracts of various sizes to run services to agreed specifications.

In the longer term, to attract more people to use buses we want to:

- build a simpler bus network which is linked in with the rest of public transport in Wales and is easy to navigate (One Network)
- create coordinated timetables which are easy to use and allow connections across public transport in Wales (One Timetable)
- introduce simpler ticketing which enables travel across public transport in Wales with affordable and consistent fares (One Ticket).

The Bus Reform Bill is going through the Senedd and we're aiming to introduce franchising from summer 2027. Work is underway to prepare for this transition. A regional approach is being taken to deliver bus reform and the key dates and regions (as they stand currently) are:

- South West Wales – 2027
- North Wales - 2028
- South East Wales - 2029
- Mid Wales – 2030



Our key stakeholders include organisations representing passengers, staff in the bus industry, community transport operators, and large, small and medium enterprise bus operators. More information on our proposed approach to bus franchising can be found [here](#).



Our proposed base network

The first step in bus reform for the region has involved Transport for Wales and local authorities jointly develop a proposal for the bus network in South West Wales. We're calling this our Proposed Base Network. This is the network we believe we can deliver within the limits of our current resources and it's this we want feedback on.

We'll be sharing more information about our Proposed Base Network, including details of the routes and frequencies, when we launch the public engagement.

We have used the current network as the starting point to develop our Proposed Base Network. Where we have access to data about travel demand, reliability of bus services and operating conditions, we are drawing on this to support the planning of the Network.

Where possible, we have used our network planning principles (see figure below) to help shape our proposed changes. We want to expand the opportunities for people to use public transport, so that it is useful to more people in more situations. That is why we have included some of the following improvements in our Proposed Base Network:

- A simpler network, that is easy to explain, remember and navigate.
- High-frequency core routes that will attract the highest patronage.
- Interchanges between bus services to enable faster journeys to more possible destinations.
- Some more direct services.

To deliver improvements, there are choices and trade-offs we need to make. For example, if having to change buses part-way into a journey would result in greater access and faster journeys for most people, would that be worthwhile? Or is providing faster journeys more important than running services later into the night?

We know that our Proposed Base Network will not be perfect for everyone. That is why we are interested in views about our Proposed Base Network, about the choices we navigate and whether we have made the right trade-offs for the South West Wales region. Feedback will help us refine our proposals.



Engagement

What we need feedback on

The core purpose of our engagement is to gather views on our Proposed Base Network, and how we should navigate trade-offs in network planning.

Collecting public input now will help ensure that we have a sound service operating in South West Wales in 2027.

We understand people may want to give us feedback on everything that matters to them about bus and we welcome that. The region wants the best service we can offer and we understand that. However, this is the very beginning of our journey in changing how bus services in Wales are delivered. Significant positive changes will take time as we go through a period of transformation and phased improvements over a number of years. As we go on this journey, we want to keep the public conversation about our proposals open. Either way, if people have important feedback to share now, then we want to hear it.

In regard to the engagement we will run over the summer, we invite responses to (but not limited to) the following themes.

Bus routes and frequency

Where buses stop and the routes they take is important. What is good about the current service in the South West area? What could be improved? Any other feedback on our proposed network?

Choices in Network Planning

When designing networks, we often face different choices and priorities. For example, is providing faster journeys more important than running services later into the night? Or, is a more frequent service more important than a slightly longer walk to the nearest bus stop?

Managing the change

Change is not always easy – even when it is positive in the longer term. Is there anything concerning about the changes to the way bus is set to be managed in Wales, more information needed, or questions still unanswered? Is there anything we can do to help ensure the change is as smooth as possible?

Other factors that shape people's experience

In our long term planning, we are considering everything that impacts the customer experience of travelling by bus. This includes journey planning, waiting at the bus stop, buying a ticket and arrival at the destination. The core focus on this engagement will be our Proposed Base Network but there will be an opportunity to feedback on other experiences using bus services in South West Wales.



Who we're engaging with

We are keen to involve everyone who has an interest in the future of bus services for the region. We want to hear a diverse range of views – from those who rely heavily on bus services currently as well as those that quite rarely or never use them.

We are engaging with a range of stakeholders across Wales to help develop our franchising preparations. In the South West, we are currently engaging with the following regional stakeholders:

- local authorities
- health boards
- education establishments
- TfW stakeholder forums
- bus operators
- transport user groups
- elected representatives (MS/MPs/Cllrs)
- community transport operators and organisations
- national park authorities
- tourism bodies
- Corporate Joint Committees

We would like to invite more regional groups to join the conversation and participate in the engagement we run over the Summer.

We'll also continue our ongoing engagement with the TfW Advisory groups to help shape our work. This includes the TfW Advisory Panel, Mid & West Regional Stakeholder Forum, Bus Reform Industry Panel and the Accessibility & Inclusion Panel.



When we'll be engaging communities

Engagement on these proposals will be taking place from Summer 2025. The current timeline is below.

1. Engagement Commitment (this publication) released – 5 June 2025.
2. Public engagement via 'Have Your Say', including stakeholder workshops and community drop-in sessions to take place – Starting on 1 July, running through July, August and September 2025.
3. Conclusion of initial public engagement and closing of online survey – 23 September 2025.
4. Analysis of engagement feedback – 24 September and 31 October 2025.
5. Overview of initial findings published – week commencing 3 November 2025.
6. Full public report published sharing our findings and illustrating next steps – December 2025.

How we'll collect feedback

We'll use the TfW online engagement platform 'Have Your Say' to share our proposed network. This information includes bus franchising plans, details on where we will be hosting in-person drop in events and all supporting documents, images, impressions and maps.

The platform will also host a survey for people to share their thoughts and opinions on the proposed bus network for South West Wales.



Materials and information

There will be material available to help stakeholders, communities and customers understand franchising, which will help with providing feedback. These will be available on the 'Have Your Say' platform and (where possible) at our events and will include:

- An online interactive map showing the network proposal in the region and printed copies for in person events
- An online survey to share feedback
- Roadmap to Bus Reform document
- Our Regional Engagement Commitment
- Illustrated timelines
- Key Contact Details – Project and Engagement Teams
- FAQs
- Easy read versions of our key materials.

Engagement platform – about 'Have Your Say'

haveyoursay.tfw.wales is an online engagement and consultation platform. It provides a space for the public and stakeholders to feedback on TfW's proposed plans.

The platform captures demographic information upon sign up such as postcode, gender and disabilities. This ensures that our engagement is inclusive, that we are engaging a diverse cross section of community and hearing from those who represent the communities we serve. This information is important as it will allow us to identify groups that we have not heard from. We will treat this information carefully and will use it only for the purposes set out here.

Survey

The online survey will aim to capture views, which will help refine our Proposed Base Network. However, there will be free text opportunities so that information can be provided on anything that matters to people about bus.

For those unable to use the online survey, we can provide paper copies that can be posted back to us. This can be done via a request to our [contact team](#) and we'll then post them. Contact us | Transport for Wales We will also have copies available to fill in and leave with us at events, or to take away and complete and post back to us.

Events

To allow as many people and groups as possible to feedback on the proposals, we'll be hosting a variety of events.

Stakeholder workshops

We'll run a mix of online and in-person workshops for key stakeholder groups so they can feedback on the plans on behalf of the communities and contacts they represent. We will issue invites to these workshops to stakeholders – listed above – ahead of the sessions. If any stakeholder groups are not represented above, but would like to join the workshop(s) we encourage them to get in touch via our [contact team](#).

Community drop-in sessions

These sessions will be open to members of the public and local stakeholders to ask questions about the survey.

The locations for the sessions are as follows and they will be publicised on the TfW website and locally in advance.

- Carmarthenshire: Carmarthen, Ammanford and Llanelli.
- Neath Port Talbot: Cymmer, Neath, Port Talbot and Pontardawe.
- Pembrokeshire: Haverfordwest, Tenby and Fishguard.
- Swansea: city centre (3 events), Gorseinon and Mumbles.

Promotion

Promotion of the online engagement platform will take place across multiple media. We'll issue posters, adverts and hand-outs with a QR code to the 'Have Your Say' page when live.

We will promote the online engagement platform on:

- Social Media:
 - Transport for Wales Facebook
 - Transport for Wales Instagram
 - Via location-based targeted advertising on Meta (Facebook and Instagram, to reach those not already following Transport for Wales on social media)



- Mainstream printed media:
 - Via advertising in local newspapers (South Wales Evening Post, Western Telegraph and Carmarthen Journal)
 - Via advertising in community news titles
- Billboard and posted advertisements at key transport and town centre and retail locations, as well as bus and rail stations.
- Business cards printed with the QR code to the engagement platform, handed out at key locations.
- Partner organisation platforms:
 - Local authorities
 - Health boards
 - Bus operators
 - Welsh Government
 - County Voluntary Councils and third sector networks
- Stakeholder bulletins
- TfW press releases – issued to all mainstream media in Wales (broadcast, print and online).
- TfW and TrawsCymru Website
- Pop up messages on TfW Apps

Contact us

Contact information is available [here](#).



Next steps

We want to collect the views of everyone interested in bus franchising in South West Wales. The data gathered from this engagement will be analysed, evaluated, summarised and published in report form. On such an important topic, transparency is key. We will share our findings with the people and organisations most affected by the proposed changes.

We'll take on board the feedback as we work in partnership with local authorities in South West Wales to update the Proposed Base Network in autumn 2025.

We will make the Updated Base Network publicly available by the end of 2025. We will also share information about how the public engagement process has helped us refine our proposals within the limits of our resources and capture common themes for improvement.